An American Butterfly

An American Butterfly

A Comedy

In Four Acts and Three Scenes

England, 1912

By ELEANOR CORDE

McBride Publishing Co.
Los Angeles, Cal.
MCMXVII.

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

Archibald, Earl of Clingsworthy

George Templeton

Edwin Shelby

Count Papheim

Coggins (*Clingsworthy's man*)

Hulks (*Barkeeper at the Inn*)

Cranston (*Boat-Captain in Act First*)

Lancaster
Bradshawe
Anglesea
Singin
Anstruthers } (*Young friends of the Earl's in Act Third*)

Eleanne Shelby (*The Butterfly*)

Countess of Clingsworthy (*The Earl's mother*)

Mrs. Olympia Farnum

Maude Osborne

Lady Isobel Tweffort

Eliza (*Keeper of the Inn*)

Marget (*Maid at the Inn*)

Two Men-Servants (*For Acts First and Third*)

ACT I.

The Deck of a House-boat on the Thames.
Early Evening in July

ACT II.

Public Parlour of The White Swan Inn,
Richmond. Morning of the
Following Day

ACT III.

Apartments of the Earl of Clingsworthy,
London. Evening of the Same Day

ACT IV.

Public Parlour of the White Swan Inn
Again. Morning of the
Following Day

An American Butterfly

THE FIRST ACT

The scene is the forward deck of a house-boat, one-third of which overhangs the river. Woody background and a road leading to the plank that breaks the railings of the house-boat at rear centre. To right of plank, some feet beyond, is a cabin door. Down right front is a second cabin door. Between both doors is a wide corridor supposed to lead to the further end of the boat. Rustic tables at right and left, the one at right holding a box of paint and a magazine. Rustic seats about. A settee down left. A gay-colored awning depends from the rear roof of the boat. Japanese lanterns, not lighted, hang about. It is early sunset of a July evening. The sky over river is rosily flushed and a moon promises to rise later on.

[MAUDE OSBORNE, *a brunette of about twenty years, handsome, though black-browed and thin-lipped, with a haughty manner and drawling voice, sits touching up a five-by-eight canvas at right table.* CRANSTON, *the middle-aged boat-captain in simple uniform, stands coiling*

a rope on plank. Down left on settee, MRS. OLYMPIA FARNUM, *a handsome woman of about twenty-five, lounges and reads a book. Men's voices in rough chorus come from woods.*]

MAUDE.

[*Frowning.*] Dear me, that racket—

MRS. FARNUM.

CRANSTON? [*Who comes to her, saluting.*] Those voices?

CRANSTON

Gypsies, me'em, makin' camp in them woods.

MRS. FARNUM.

Indeed? [CRANSTON *salutes and crosses plank to vanish to right of boat.* MRS. FARNUM *reads again.*]

MAUDE.

But, Olympia—are we safe so near them?

MRS. FARNUM.

[*With slight sarcasm.*] After your tales of Indian tigers—!

MAUDE.

[*Huffily.*] Oh—, I'm not afraid, but Aunt Constance will be.

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Dryly.*] We'll wait and see.

MAUDE.

[*After a moment.*] Wouldn't be surprised if Eleanne were over there, having her palm read.

MRS. FARNUM.

Putting yourself in Eleanne's place?

MAUDE.

I'm not. Besides, in India we'd call your English gypsy—a liar.

MRS. FARNUM.

Ever tested the powers of a Hindu seer?

MAUDE.

Um— a month before I left Calcutta. He foretold my visit to England.

MRS. FARNUM.

Say anything about Charley Bagot?

MAUDE.

[*After a teasing pause.*] Not— a— single— word.

MRS. FARNUM.

Yet he's loved you—

MAUDE.

For three years.

MRS. FARNUM.

Refused him?

MAUDE.

Um— not yet. A—h— poor Charley.

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Closing book and sitting up.*] You know, of course, the reason for this house-boat trip?

MAUDE.

Eleanne's silly plan to ingratiate herself—

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Sharply.*] Eleanne's ardent wish to win Archie's mother to see her as Archie sees her— She would have succeeded too— [*pausing meaningly.*]

MAUDE.

If I'd remained in London?

MRS. FARNUM.

Yes. When do you return to India?

MAUDE.

Why return— since Aunt Constance has learned to love me?

MRS. FARNUM.

You remain because you believe—

MAUDE.

That I could make Archie as good a wife as Eleanne—

MRS. FARNUM.

But since Archie does NOT think so?

MAUDE.

Pooh! Men are never really married till after the ceremony.

[LADY CLINGSWORTHY, *sweet-faced, silver-haired, aged fifty-five, the type easily swayed by a stronger will, yet kindly-hearted, comes from cabin down front.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

That awful racket——

MAUDE.

[*Flying to place seat at table right and give magazine.*] Dear Aunt Constance—. Gypsies over in those woods——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

But are we safe so near them?

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Reading again.*] Quite safe, Aunt.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Ah— [*Reading. Then explosively.*] Oh,— I'm so sick of those woods and I never knew before how stupid a river-view could be!

MAUDE.

Poor dear Auntie!

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Where is Eleanne?

MRS. FARNUM.

Gone to the village for a banjo string.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

But, with those wild men yonder—

MRS. FARNUM.

Make your mind easy, Aunt.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*After a moment.*] Four women on a house-boat— for six days—! Are you listening, Olympia?

MRS. FARNUM.

Aunt? [*Patiently closing book.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

A week wasted! I'd planned to take some flannels down to Richmond—

MRS. FARNUM.

Cannot Mrs. Rogers—

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Eliza wouldn't risk a flannel of her own buying. I never would have wasted this week— had I not h—hoped— [*Mopping her eyes.*]

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Sharply.*] That Eleanne— within a month of her marriage— would throw Archie over? Pah—

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Whimperingly.*] But he'd still have his mother. And Eleanne's the last wife I'd have chosen for my boy. A whimsical butterfly—

MRS. FARNUM.

With golden wings! The old Abbey sadly needs repairs. So that Eleanne's millions—

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Made in whiskey! I'm always in a constant fever lest the girl break out into some tale of a dress as a semi-annual affair—

MRS. FARNUM.

Stuff! Shelby Grange is as far beyond the old Abbey as is an electric light to— to a penny dip. I lived within a mile of it for two happy years—, so I know.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Ah well—. [*To* MAUDE.] *We* think the Abbey grand enough—

MAUDE.

Auntie dear, I love every leaf of ivy on its walls!

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Ah—h! I'm sure of it.

MRS. FARNUM.

Try to remember, Aunt, that Eleanne has been motherless since the age of ten—fatherless al-

most, for Abner Shelby's vast interests take him constantly from his home—. Indeed, you may thank your stars that this blue-grass butterfly brings not only her millions but a heart full of love for your only son.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Well, perhaps you are right. But, thank heaven, her awful brother has gone home.

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Laughing.*] Edwin *was* a bit wild.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Count Papheim told Maude that Edwin was a plunger at cards— [MRS. FARNUM *looks scornfully at* MAUDE.]

MAUDE.

I thought Archie's mother should know! Aha—what would Auntie say if she knew—[*Purposely pausing.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Alarmed.*] Maude—?

MAUDE.

Olympia forbids.

MRS. FARNUM.

Simply that Eleanne, at the Beauclercs last night indulged in a dance—

MAUDE.

A Spanish fandango !! [LADY CLINGSWORTHY *utters a cry of dismay.*]

MRS. FARNUM.

But on a dare of Fanny Beauclerc's—

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

But— if the newspapers get hold of it?

MAUDE.

And they print things in such l-a-r-g-e letters, too! [LADY CLINGSWORTHY *sinks into troubled thought.* MAUDE *touches her sketch and* MRS. FARNUM *reads her book. After a moment a ripple of banjo melody comes from woods.* MRS. FARNUM *rises smiling.* MAUDE *looks up eagerly, and* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *visibly stiffens as* ELEANNE SHELBY, *a slim, graceful girl of nineteen, in white dress and scarlet cap, a banjo in one hand, a small paper package in the other, comes from woods along road to plank and deck with animated look and waving hand.*]

ELEANNE.

Howdy—Howdy, everybody—[*Snatching off her cap and waving it gaily.* MRS. FARNUM *takes her to table at the left.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

I'm thankful, Eleanne, that you've returned in safety.

ELEANNE.

Pshaw! And I've had such a jolly afternoon—

MAUDE.

In that gypsy camp?

ELEANNE.

Of course. Like our darkey picnics at home—. Pots a-boiling, babies rolling round, the men—doing nothing, the women getting supper—and such a de—licious smell of garlic——

MAUDE.

I wonder you didn't wait for—the garlic.

ELEANNE.

[*Going to her laughingly.*] You mean you wonder if I've had my palm read? I am to change my initial from S to—[*purposely pausing and holding up her palm.*]

MAUDE.

[*Breathlessly.*] Do go on—

ELEANNE.

From S to C. [MAUDE *frowns and resumes her sketch.* ELEANNE *laughs, returns to table and carelessly runs her fingers over the banjo strings, her laughing eyes on* MAUDE.]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Do, child, cease playing that horrid instrument.

ELEANNE.

[*Obeying.*] Horrid? When I get to the Happy Hunting Ground I'll choose a banjo instead of a harp. [*To* MRS. FARNUM—*mournfully.*] Fancy! Not a firecracker within fifty miles— [LADY CLINGSWORTHY *looks up from her book.*]

MRS. FARNUM.

We should have brought some from town—

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Fire-crackers?

MAUDE.

This is Eleanne's Independence Day, Auntie.

ELEANNE.

Yes. The glorius Fourth. [*To* MRS. FARNUM.] Ah-h—There'll be high jinks at the Grange tonight—I'm far from my old Kentucky home and just homesick for the sound of a whiz—or a fizz. [*Opening package at table, taking a rosette from it and holding it up for* MAUDE'S *appraisal.*] Isn't it a dandy?

MAUDE.

Well, perhaps. But I do not admire the tricolor—

ELEANNE.

Tri-color shucks! It's the red-white-and-blue of America! [*Pinning it on her blouse.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

This "patriotism"—[*Frowningly.*]

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Quickly.*] By this time next year Eleanne will be living contentedly under our Union Jack—

ELEANNE.

[*Going to* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *animatedly.*]

Yes—Archie's people shall my people be—his flag mine. [*Gently kissing* LADY CLINGSWORTHY'S *cheek.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Surrendering.*] And you'll be the first mistress of the Abbey *not* born on English soil——

ELEANNE.

Ah-h! You'll forgive me that—after awhile. [MAUDE *suddenly brings down the sketch and crowds between* ELEANNE *and* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *to show it.*]

MAUDE.

Look, Aunt Constance——.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Admiringly.*] How—b-beautiful!

ELEANNE.

[*Peering at sketch.*] Crumbly old pile! What is it—a fortress?

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Quaveringly.*] It is Clingsworthy Abbey——.

ELEANNE.

[*Regretfully.*] Oh—[MAUDE *takes the sketch from* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *and resumes her seat with a frown.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

And Archie's birthplace——

MAUDE.

[*With a defiant look at* ELEANNE.] My mother's birthplace, too.

[LADY CLINGSWORTHY *resumes her book.*]

ELEANNE.

Oh—forgive me, dear. [LADY CLINGSWORTHY *shrugs a shoulder.* ELEANNE, *finding herself ignored, bites her lip.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Explosively.*] Oh—, this awful week——

ELEANNE.

Ah—don't say that, dear.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

It must have been hard on my boy, too. [ELEANNE *clenches her hands for self-control, with agitated look. Remorsefully.*] But—you are so hard to understand——

ELEANNE.

Try only to understand that I love your son devotedly—that I want to win your love, too— [LADY CLINGSWORTHY *deliberately resumes her reading.* ELEANNE, *frozen out, goes dejectedly to rails at left and stares out at the river.*]

MAUDE.

Auntie, dear, why not leave it to time to transform Eleanne?

ELEANNE.

[*Over her shoulder—scornfully.*] How I should hate myself—, a spiritless creature—walking a chalk-mark—! [*Resuming her dejected pose.*]

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Going to* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *and speaking in lowered tones.* ELEANNE *shows that she hears.*] Aunt—you are cruel——.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*In same lowered tones.* But—, Eleanne's ideas of decorum——!

MRS. FARNUM.

Tush——.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Her bizarre characteristics—, her abnormal point of view—, and almost banal impulsiveness—[MRS. FARNUM, *with a gesture of resentment, moves to left.*]

ELEANNE.

[*Coming to her from the rails with agitated looks.*] Oh—oh——

MRS. FARNUM.

Courage—dear—. Courage——.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*To* MRS. FARNUM.] And if Eleanne's next exploit be not the top of a Picadilly omnibus——.

ELEANNE.

[*Recklessly.*] Aha—too tame—, after a cow-catcher! Ah—. There's liberty for you—. [LADY CLINGSWORTHY *begins to utter little cries of dismay.*] The big reflector over one's head—, a mile a minute over the blue grass—. What if one's dress is torn or a shoe gets away——?

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Trying to stop her.*] Eleanne dear——

ELEANNE.

[*Waving her aside.*] As for "decorum"—it's where it belongs—, in the baggage-car—, with dad's whiskey barrels—. [*Turning to rails and resuming her dejected pose.* MRS. FARNUM *again calls* LADY CLINGSWORTHY'S *attention to* ELEANNE'S *dejection.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Softening and going to* ELEANNE.] My dear child——

ELEANNE.

Please—please! I only ask to be let alone!

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

But—seriously——.

ELEANNE.

I decline to be "serious" for ages to come.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

But the time is near, when, as mistress of the Abbey——

ELEANNE.

Yes—, I know. Jellies for the sick and flannels for the old——.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Haughtily.*] Then you do not like the prospect? [MAUDE *goes to* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *with a look of sympathy.*]

ELEANNE.

[*Agitatedly.*] Ah—why do you make me say such things.? You won't understand——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

I understand that my son has offered you an assured position—, his ancient name—[MAUDE *puts an arm about* LADY CLINGSWORTHY.]

ELEANNE.

[*As haughtily.*] The exchange is even, madam.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Icily.*] Ah—. You think so? [*Allowing* MAUDE *to lead her into cabin down front.* ELEANNE *falls on settee with a cry of despair.*]

MRS. FARNUM.

My poor darling——.

ELEANNE.

Yes—, the exchange *is* even. For I'm giving up dad, home and friends—. Besides, Archie's mother prefers Maude——,

MRS. FARNUM.

Who's engaged to a Charley Bagot of Calcutta——

ELEANNE.

I'm glad to hear that. Ah-h, my "bizarre characteristics"—my "almost banal impulsiveness"—Oh—! this daily effort to crowd my nature into a small space—. [*Musing,—then with conviction.*] I believe it will be better to withdraw——,

MRS. FARNUM.

[*In consternation.*] You mean—to—to throw Archie over?

ELEANNE.

For Archie's happiness—, yes.

MRS. FARNUM.

But—*he loves you!*

ELEANNE.

Yes. But—later—, what if he too should insist on this dry-as-dust "decorum!" Ah-h—, that wedding thirty days away. Olympia, I'd rather go with Archie to some quiet parsonage and leave it—a minute after—as his wife—. [*In gloomy thought.*]

MRS. FARNUM.

Listen, dear. A good man truly loves you. As for his mother, she's worth winning, too. Give her another chance. [*Kissing her and exiting to corridor.* ELEANNE *remains in thought.*

After a moment CRANSTON *comes from right of boat to plank, a bit of paper in his hand.*]

CRANSTON.

[*Saluting and offering note.*] For you, miss. Young gent waitin' an answer yonder——.

ELEANNE.

[*Taking note and reading it with growing agitation.*] CRANSTON—you—you may tell him to come aboard—[CRANSTON *salutes, exits to right of boat.* ELEANNE *runs to cabin down right, then to corridor, listening. Then, suddenly throws up her head, hurries to table at right, picks up magazine and pretends to read intently.*]

[EDWIN SHELBY, *aged twenty, in grey tweeds, sailor hat and rose in coat, sneaks from right of boat, finds the coast clear, runs over plank, whips out his handkerchief and places it lightly over* ELEANNE'S *eyes. She remains motionless. Removing the handkerchief, he discovers the banjo on table at left and softly touches the strings.* ELEANNE'S *look softens. He plays a bar of "Old Kentucky Home."* ELEANNE *drops the magazine, and, with a cry of grief rushes to his arms.*]

EDWIN.

Nella darling—[*Kissing her.*]

ELEANNE.

Oh—Edwin! [*Sobbingly.*]

EDWIN.

Wut's the trouble, Nella dear?

ELEANNE.

It's my first holiday from home and—I've been crying all afternoon in those woods——,

EDWIN.

Poor little scout——.

ELEANNE.

[*Beginning to show fear of interruption.*] But I thought you'd gone home—

EDWIN.

Changed my mind. Been livin' down at Richmond under the name o' Brown——

ELEANNE.

Under another name! But why?

EDWIN.

Keepin' shady, doncherknow—! Would've gone, but—[*Shows empty pockets.*]

ELEANNE.

But I gave you enough——

EDWIN.

You've only to lend me five hundred puns more——.

ELEANNE.

Five—hundred—pounds! EDWIN!

EDWIN.

[*Sullenly.*] Well, half of it's for a g-gambling debt!

ELEANNE.

Oh—oh—. If these people should hear—! Edwin—, Archie's people believe you've gone home! [EDWIN *shrugs.* ELEANNE *anxiously listens at cabin door front, then runs to* EDWIN, *gently urging him to plank.*] Edwin—you must go——

EDWIN.

[*Resisting.*] What! Without that loan? Come across, Nella dear—I'll pay it back——.

ELEANNE.

Where are you staying?

EDWIN.

[*Animatedly.*] White Swan Inn, Richmond. See you 'leven train tomorrow? [ELEANNE *anxiously pushes him to plank.*] You'll be there with the cash?

ELEANNE.

Yes. Only go—. [EDWIN *runs over plank, blows a kiss and vanishes to right.*]

ELEANNE.

[*Watching him off, agitatedly.* MAUDE *comes from cabin down right, pauses, draws back and listens.*] White Swan Inn, Richmond—eleven train tomorrow—[*Dejectedly dropping her head and entering cabin rear.*]

MAUDE.

[*Coming out—, wonderingly.*] White Swan Inn? Why that's Mrs. Rogers' place! Eleven

train tomorrow, she said! What in the world—. Cranston must have brought her a message. Oh—, if I could coax Aunt Constance down there—[*Laughing.*] I will, too! [*Taking letter from belt and reading.*] "I have waited two years. If I don't get a cable within three days—, an acceptance—, I shall try to forget you." [*Replacing letter smilingly.*] Ah—poor Charley—. [*Men's voices heard from beyond. Looking that way, her face grows radiant. She runs to hiding in corridor.*]

[LORD CLINGSWORTHY, *a good-looking, stalwart young Englishman of twenty-four years, comes from woods, followed by* GEORGE TEMPLETON, *the same type, but a few years older. Both wear knickers and caps. They hurry to the deck and look about eagerly.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

Hah, George—! Nobody here—. Can they've gone up to town?

GEORGE.

[*Resentfully.*] But, Archie, didn't you say you heard the tinkle of a banjo?

CLINGSWORTHY.

Could have sworn it—[*Seeing* MAUDE *running to him from corridor. In casual tone.*] Hello, Maude——

GEORGE.

Miss Osborne—[*Bowing.*]

MAUDE.

[*Ignoring* GEORGE *and throwing her arms about* CLINGSWORTHY.] Archie—oh—, Archie dear—[*Kissing his cheek, and laying her head on his breast.* CLINGSWORTHY *grimaces to the look of comic sympathy on* GEORGE'S *face.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

The place looks deserted—[*Getting away.*]

MAUDE.

George, you'll find Olympia at the further end of the boat——

GEORGE.

[*Radiantly.*] Thanks—[*Hurrying to corridor, followed by* CLINGSWORTHY.] Nay, nay, son—, you'll be one too many—[*Entering corridor quickly.* MAUDE *watches sullenly.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Looking after* GEORGE.] What luck—, for George! [*Coming down to* MAUDE.] Maudie dear——

MAUDE.

[*Radiant again, leaning against him and beginning to twist a button of his jacket.*] Archie dear, I've—we've all missed you so! [*Noting that* CLINGSWORTHY *continues to stare about. Poutingly.*] But you don't seem glad to see Cousin Maude!

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Patting her arm.*] I'm delighted! But—, where are the others?

MAUDE.

[*Smoothing his sleeve.*] Aunt Constance is lying down——

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Quickly.*] My mother's not ill?

MAUDE.

Dear me, no! Only asleep. So tired of this awful week——.

CLINGSWORTHY.

Gad—, what a waste of precious time! Six lost days—and every day an eternity. [*Breaking away and hungrily eyeing both cabin doors.*] At which door shall I knock, Maude?

MAUDE.

[*Stonily, turning a magazine page at table.*] Why not try both?

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Coming to her.*] But didn't you say that mother was asleep? [*Coaxingly.*] Maude——

MAUDE.

[*Shaking off his hand.*] Then I'm not to inform your mother. And—as usual, I am to be made use of—, for Eleanne's benefit—[*Angrily pushing open cabin door down front and entering.*

CLINGSWORTHY *looks after her laughingly as* ELEANNE *comes from rear cabin. Her face grows radiant as she comes down.* CLINGSWORTHY *turns, sees her, embraces her fervently.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

ELEANNE!

ELEANNE.

[*Returning his embrace and laughing hysterically.*] Archie—now I'm going to be happy—I shall learn to be demure——

CLINGSWORTHY.

Aha—I forbid——

ELEANNE.

To exchange "for the fun of the thing" for "the looks of the thing"—[*Breaking from him and mopping her eyes at rails at left.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Following wonderingly.*] But Eleanne——

ELEANNE.

No—no—. Keep away——

CLINGSWORTHY.

Haven't I "kept away" for six days?

ELEANNE.

But you shouldn't have——

CLINGSWORTHY.

Yet your commands were——

ELEANNE.

[*Going to him.*] Ah—forgive me——.

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Taking her in his arms.*] George and I've been following your boat for three days and nights——

ELEANNE.

You poor dear——

CLINGSWORTHY.

Last night we heard your banjo——

ELEANNE.

You thought me cruel? Oh—if I were only different!

CLINGSWORTHY.

Wouldn't have you different—[*Kissing her.*] for a kingdom!

ELEANNE.

[*Wistfully.*] Not changed in any way?

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Taking her to settee at left.*] Dear, I'm not much of a Christian and I've forgotten half my prayers—but since you've taken my life into your hands—[*Drawing her to him.*]

ELEANNE.

If I were sure that it would last!

CLINGSWORTHY.

My love for you! Ah—. Now tell me why you've cut out six precious days——

ELEANNE.

[*Sadly.*] On an experiment that failed.

CLINGSWORTHY.

But why make it a secret?

ELEANNE.

Dear—, it shall be the very last——

CLINGSWORTHY.

I'm glad of that!

ELEANNE.

But wait — there's still another— [CLINGSWORTHY *frowns.*] But by this time tomorrow all my thoughts shall be known to you.

CLINGSWORTHY.

Aha— [*Kissing her hand.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Coming from cabin and agitatedly stumbling forward.*] Archie!

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Going to her and taking her into his arms.* ELEANNE *instantly moves to railings at left, but shows that she hears.*] Mother—. There—there— [*Patting her shoulder.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

But I won't *have* you pitying me!

CLINGSWORTHY.

Pitying you? [*Laughing and seating her at right.*] When you've been floating round Paradise with—[*Noting* ELEANNE *at rails. In lower tone.*] Mother, you've had *such* a chance to know Eleanne's sunny nature—her generous soul!

LADY CLINGSWORTHY

[*In lower tone. Coldly.*] I can*not* see through your rosy glasses.

CLINGSWORTHY.

But so evident——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY

Not—always! [ELEANNE *turns and makes for the corridor.* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *notes this, and her head drops.* CLINGSWORTHY *intercepts* ELEANNE *and points to his mother.* ELEANNE'S *face softens.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY

[*Mournfully.*] Ah—this wasted week!

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Bringing* ELEANNE *down.*] Not wasted, mother, if it will bring to know each other the two that are dearest on earth to me! Mother—[*Appealingly to her.* Eleanne—[*Appealingly to her.*]

ELEANNE.

[*Falling at* LADY .CLINGSWORTHY'S *knee.*] Dear, why won't you love me—why won't you?

LADY CLINGSWORTHY

[*Whimpering.*] Eleanne—Archie—I want to go h—home—!

CLINGSWORTHY.

And so you shall, mother—[*Leaning over* ELEANNE *to kiss his mother.*]

ELEANNE.

Olympia has just given the word——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY

Ah! Archie, you look like your father tonight—he was just your age when—. But we were *not* strangers—so marriage—for us——

ELEANNE.

My father and mother were reared a thousand miles apart. Yet when love spoke, Eleanne Kelcey of Massachusetts laid her hand in that of Abner Shelby of Kentucky——

CLINGSWORTHY.

"Eleanne!" Your mother's name, too? By Jove—I'm going to like your father immensely when we meet next month—[*Lifting* ELEANNE, *who runs to table at left, takes her banjo and rejoins him.*] You'll come, mother?

LADY CLINGSWORTHY

No, no! I must get used to losing my boy! Run along, children — [CLINGSWORTHY *and* ELEANNE *exit to corridor.* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *reads,* MAUDE *comes from cabin with a shawl. A man-servant comes from corridor with a lighted pole and lights the lanterns, the moon now brighter, the woods more in shadow.* MAUDE *throws the shawl over* LADY CLINGSWORTHY'S *shoulders, then peers frowningly into corridor.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY

[*Startled.*] Maude—! You enter so softly——

MAUDE.

[*With a short laugh.*] Cat-like, as Olympia says.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY

Precisely. And—[*Discarding shawl.*] I do *not* need this.

MAUDE.

[*Taking shawl, grumpily.*] Very well—[*Taking it again into cabin.* GEORGE *comes from corridor with* MRS. FARNUM. *His face beams with happiness.* MRS. FARNUM *gives some order to the man-servant, who exits to corridor with pole.*]

GEORGE.

[*Coming with extended hand to* LADY CLINGSWORTHY.] Dear Lady Clingsworthy——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY

[*Graciously—, taking his hand.*] George *dear*—and Archie never mentioned——

GEORGE.

Make allowance for a man in love. [MAUDE *again comes from cabin and retreats to rails at right of plank.*] Archie and I've been following your house-boat for three days——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Not mine, George! I am still in the dark as to which is hostess—Olympia or Eleanne——

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Laughing.*] Aunt Constance——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

I only ask to see beyond my nose!

MAUDE.

Aunt Constance—[*Coming down quickly.*] I certainly hear the beat of a motor beyond those woods——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Dear me—if someone we knew——! [*Rising quickly.*]

MAUDE.

We can see better at the end of the boat.—[*Exit both in corridor.* GEORGE *laughs wisely.*]

MRS. FARNUM.

Where Maude will hover between Eleanne and

Archie—[*Falling on settee at left.*] What I've lived through these six days—!

GEORGE.

[*Sitting beside her and fumbling for her hand.*] Same here. London—a desert——

MRS. FARNUM.

But London—*in July?*

GEORGE.

When a fellow's best friend's out of sight! [*Kissing her hand.*]

MRS. FARNUM.

Don't! [*Withdrawing her hand.*] I've enough else to worry me—[GEORGE *moves dejectedly off to rails. Repenting.*] George—[*He returns instantly.*] But you must be patient——

GEORGE.

I've been patient since the day I saw you come down that gang-plank a widow!

MRS. FARNUM.

It was *hard* to leave poor Jack under that Kentucky grass!

GEORGE.

Uh-uh! Jack was a good fellow—but no better than I'll be if you'll give me the chance! Oylmpia, why not lunch with me tomorrow? There's a quiet little Inn at Richmond——

MRS. FARNUM.

The White Swan? [*Laughing.*]

GEORGE.

Uh-uh!

MRS. FARNUM.

Archie's mother bought it for her old servant Eliza when she married Rogers, the footman.

GEORGE.

Say you'll go. I want to talk to you seriously.

MRS. FARNUM.

And my year of widowhood not yet finished?

GEORGE.

Meet you at the station—keep away from you the journey down——

MRS. FARNUM.

No — no — I promised Eleanne's father — [GEORGE *goes dejectedly to rails at left.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Coming from corridor with* MAUDE.] Olympia—George—a motor beyond those woods—Wouldn't it be a mercy if——

LADY ISOBEL TWEFFORT.

[*Blonde, aged thirty, dashing type, in motor dress and veil, comes on road, to plank, waving her hands.*] Hello-o—hell-o-o——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Clapping her hands.*] It's Isobel Tweffort. [COUNT PAPHEIM, *a nattily-dressed, low-sized foreigner, dark-haired, shifty eyes, with a pointed mustache over an ever-smiling lip, carrying* LADY TWEFFORT'S *dust-cloak, follows to deck.*]

LADY TWEFFORT.

Ah—George dear—Maude—Olympia— [*Making for* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *and kissing both cheeks.*] Dear—darling—[GEORGE *steps abruptly before* PAPHEIM, *who recoils, indicating the cloak with a deprecatory smile.* GEORGE *scowls, then steps aside and* PAPHEIM *comes down.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Isobel—delighted to see you. [*Two men-servants roll in a tea-cart from corridor.* MRS. FARNUM *and* GEORGE *go to it.*]

PAPHEIM.

Madame la Comtesse—[*Kissing* LADY CLINGSWORTHY'S *hand.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Ah, Count—such a surprise—[PAPHEIM moves *off to* MAUDE *at left and they slily exchange familiar greetings.*]

LADY TWEFFORT.

We saw your house-boat at a turn in the road and I wagered. Pappy, that sov is mine!

PAPHEIM.

But eef I 'ave no sov, eh?

LADY TWEFFORT.

Then you'll beg, borrow or steal one. [GEORGE *brings a cup of tea to* LADY CLINGSWORTHY. *A man-servant offers one to* MAUDE. *She rejects it; he takes it to* PAPHEIM, *who also rejects it. Servant takes it back to cart.* GEORGE *brings a cup to* LADY TWEFFORT.] Thanks, George dear. [*Sitting beside* LADY CLINGSWORTHY. GEORGE *joins* MRS. FARNUM *at cart. Noting this.*] George is still singeing his wings!

MRS. FARNUM.

Isobel! [*Frowning.*]

GEORGE.

Everything that flies must meet its Waterloo—. [*Coming down laughing.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

And why Olympia keeps George waiting with an excuse of an unfinished year of widowhood—. [GEORGE *slily kisses* LADY CLINGSWORTHY'S *hand.*]

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Angrily.*] Aunt Constance——

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*To* LADY CLINGSWORTHY.] Dear, you look weary and worn——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

The way I feel—. Six days adrift—on a house-boat——!

GEORGE.

Oh—come now——

LADY TWEFFORT.

Be quiet, George! I can fancy the poor—dear—exiled — [*Patting* LADY CLINGSWORTHY'S *hand.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Fancy Archie and George following this house-boat for three days——

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Eagerly.*] Then Archie is——

GEORGE.

[*Deliberately.*] At the other end of the boat with Miss Shelby—. Lovers hiding from the moon——

LADY TWEFFORT.

Pshaw, George. You're too silly. [*Rising and turning to corridor.*]

GEORGE.

But, look here—. Would it be fair to interrupt? [*Going to her.*]

LADY TWEFFORT.

Don't worry, George dear. I'll simply say "how-do"——

GEORGE.

[*Offering his arm laughingly.*] Then let me

show you the way—[LADY TWEFFORT *frowns, takes his arm.* GEORGE *looks back.*] Olympia? [*Who joins him. To* LADY CLINGSWORTHY.] If you will——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Sitting at table and holding up magazine smilingly.*] I really must finish—[GEORGE *bows, and takes* MRS. FARNUM *and* LADY TWEFFORT *through* corridor. MAUDE *signals to* PAPHEIM, *who slips to settee. She joins him with sketch as the two men-servants wheel out the tea-cart through corridor.*]

MAUDE.

[*Shielding her face with sketch. In lowered tones.*[Well, how's the chase?

PAPHEIM.

[*In same lowered tones, with a shrug.*] Very bad! Last week, a touch of de hand only—a leetle bow as we passed in de dance—. Ah-h—[*Hopelessly.*]

MAUDE.

Surely you're *not* giving up. [PAPHEIM *shrugs with mournful look.*] Not while the butterfly's wings are still free! No, no—. You've still a chance——

PAPHEIM.

Ah—you tink so? You vill 'elp me? [MAUDE *gives her hand. He kisses it.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Are you there, Maude?

MAUDE.

Yes, Aunt—[*Coming down and holding up the sketch.*] The Count admires——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

That's kind of him. I—I feel so chilly——

MAUDE.

Your shawl, dear—[*Taking sketch to cabin down front and throwing a meaning look to* PAPHEIM, *who joins* LADY CLINGSWORTHY. *Exit* MAUDE *to cabin.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Count, you are at liberty to desert an old woman——.

PAPHEIM.

Eef Madame la Comtesse vill permit? [*Sitting near her.*] You admire de sveet seclusion?

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Frowning.*] No. But it seems to suit *some* people——

PAPHEIM.

La belle Americaine, for eenstance? Ah—she is so vull of veem—so approachable——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

In a young girl—, not an admirable trait.

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Hurrying from corridor.*] Pappy—go look at the gorgeous sunset from the other end of the boat—. [PAPHEIM *pantomimes reluctance to obey.* LADY TWEFFORT *takes* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *to settee at left and sits beside her.* PAPHEIM *braces himself and suddenly plunges into corridor.*] Now, the news. This American girl——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

My dear! Archie actually adores——

LADY TWEFFORT.

Her millions?

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

No. I believe if Eleanne had not one shilling—[LADY TWEFFORT'S *hand flies to her bosom.*] My *dear——?*

LADY TWEFFORT.

Oh—, don't mind me——.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

But—you're so pale——!

LADY TWEFFORT.

Too long at the wheel——.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

But why didn't the Count——

LADY TWEFFORT.

Pah—. Papheim's absolutely useless as a driver. But go on, dear.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Well, it will all be over in thirty days—. And if I were sure this American girl could make my boy happy——

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Jealously.*] So she's won you over at last!

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

And what—after all—have I against her?

LADY TWEFFORT.

After that fandango last week?

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

But—on a dare of Fanny Beauclerc's. They must have voted Eleanne the palm for grace——

LADY TWEFFORT.

And abandon, too! [LADY CLINGSWORTHY *recoils.*] But—we can't all be circumspect! [*A cornet solo comes from woods softly playing "America."* MAUDE *comes from cabin,* LADY TWEFFORT *catches her eye, and grimaces,* MAUDE *nods, and joins her at settee as* ELEANNE, *followed by* CLINGSWORTHY, *comes from corridor.* ELEANNE *runs to plank and listend with heaving bosom.* CLINGSWORTHY *watches her with a smile of sympathy.* PAPHEIM *slips from corridor and goes to behind settee, watching* ELEANNE *approvingly.* LADY TWEFFORT *touches* LADY CLINGSWORTHY'S *hand and indicates* ELEANNE'S *"enthusiasm."* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *frowns, watching* ELEANNE. *The music fades.*]

ELEANNE.

[*Turning agitatedly to* CLINGSWORTHY.] Wasn't it splendid? Like a message from home!

CLINGSWORTHY.

Well played, too!

LADY TWEFFORT.

Miss Shelby's taking to our British music quite readily, isn't she?

ELEANNE.

But, dear Lady Tweffort, it was "America."

LADY TWEFFORT.

It was "God Save the King."

CLINGSWORTHY.

Aha—. You are both right!

ELEANNE.

But, Archie—, if it be some lonely tourist? *An American!*

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Utterly ridiculous!

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Laughing.*] More likely some tipsy Britisher!

ELEANNE.

[*Appealingly.*] Archie—send someone to find out! [*Running to plank and peering off.*]

LADY TWEFFORT.

The man might bring his hat along——

MAUDE.

For a collection!

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

I would suggest, Archie, that Eleanne leave that plank.

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Frowning.*] Mother—. [*Extending his hand to* ELEANNE.] Eleanne——

ELEANNE.

In a moment—[*Looking off under her hand.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Archie—I insist——

ELEANNE.

[*A piccolo breaks out in "Yankee Doodle."* ELEANNE *rushes to the end of the plank, snatches the rosette from her blouse and waves it wildly to woods.* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *seizes her son's arm and compels him to take her into corridor.* LADY TWEFFORT *and* MAUDE *watch* ELEANNE *a moment, laugh softly and enter the corridor as the music dies off.* ELEANNE *comes up the plank fastening on her rosette, her face still radiant.*]

PAPHEIM.

[*Clapping his hands.*] Bravo—the Goddess of Liberty's self!

ELEANNE.

[*Laughing.*] Thanks. [*Looking round.*] But where are——

PAPHEIM.

De 'ave deserted you——

ELEANNE.

[*Her face falling.*] But—but——

PAPHEIM.

Milord? 'E 'ave been captured by 'is mothaire. [ELEANNE *turns away.*] Mam'selle vas not offended by de music——

ELEANNE.

No—why should I be? It was beautiful——.

PAPHEIM.

Den I vill confess—as ve passed de gypsy camp—I thought it a compliment to a charming Americaine—! Ah—dese people vill nevaire understand you. A lovely butterfly among de thorns—Mees Shelby—Eleanne—[*Trying to take her hand.*]

ELEANNE.

[*Turning on him in fury.*] How dare you say such things to me?

PAPHEIM.

[*Giving up hope.*] Ah vell——

ELEANNE.

You've placed me in a false position—[*Agitatedly.*]

PAPHEIM.

Ah vell—dere ees always de humble pie—. [*Seeing* CLINGSWORTHY *coming from corridor, he turns away.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Going to* ELEANNE.] Forgive my desertion——

ELEANNE.

[*Brightly.*] No, no—the fault was mine. Let me confess to your mother——

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Taking her to right.*] You must not. And—you've been crying——

ELEANNE.

No—just laughing—[*Hurrying him to corridor.* PAPHEIM *humps a shoulder, dismissing hope. Suddenly looking toward corridor, he runs to dust-cloak and seizes it.*]

GEORGE.

[*Coming from corridor and making for* PAPHEIM.] That damned music—some dirty trick of yours, eh? [*Seizing his arm roughly.*] What are you doing here—among decent people?

PAPHEIM.

I am 'ere as escort——

GEORGE.

[*Snatching the cloak and tossing it again on

the settee.] I'll give you—[*Looking at watch.*] just one minute in which to vanish——

PAPHEIM.

But Lady Tweffort——

GEORGE.

She can pick you up on the road there—[*Pushing him to plank.*] One minute. [*Exits to corridor.* PAPHEIM *glares after him, sits obstinately, fancies he hears him returning, runs over plank and exits to woods.* CLINGSWORTHY *hurries from corridor, looks around eagerly, spies the dust-cloak on settee, makes for it and turns to find that* LADY TWEFFORT *has entered also.*]

LADY TWEFFORT.

Thank you—[*Turning so that* CLINGSWORTHY *must place the cloak on her.*] But you were always kind——.

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Worriedly watching corridor.*] T'sha!

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Suddenly turning and catching his hands at her collar.*] How nice and warm your hands feel, Archie—, quite like they used to. [*Sentimentally.*] Must I motor home under that moon with just—Papheim?

CLINGSWORTHY.

Well—you might go to sleep. [*Getting away*

and turning a page of magazine on the table at right.]

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Biting her lip. Then, sweetly, going to him.*] But——, doesn't that moon remind you of Florence?

CLINGSWORTHY.

Same old moon, of course.

LADY TWEFFORT.

Archie—[*Reproachfully.*] I've been a free woman for half a year—yet you've never called on me——!

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Impatiently, discarding the magazine.*] My dear Lady Tweffort——

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Agitatedly.*] It—it was "Isobel" a year ago!

CLINGSWORTHY.

Yes—, it was! A charming woman, married to a man twice your age, in a foreign city, you were lonely, so was I—, and, like a hot-headed fool, I lost my head——

LADY TWEFFORT.

And I my h-heart. [*Sinking on settee.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

Well, we quitted the game in time to save the honor of us both—[LADY TWEFFORT *utters a cry*

of grief. Going to behind settee and touching her arm.] Isobel——

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Clinging to his arm agitatedly.*] Oh, Archie—Archie——!

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Worriedly looking to corridor.*] Come—be sensible——.

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Recovering and mopping her eyes.*] When do you return to town?

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Leaving settee with look of relief.*] That bachelor dinner tomorrow night——

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Laughing.*] Your send-off? I may see you again?

CLINGSWORTHY.

But—*a bachelor dinner!* [LADY TWEFFORT *laughs.*] Not to be thought of! [LADY CLINGSWORTHY *with* MAUDE, *followed by* ELEANNE, MRS. FARNUM *and* GEORGE *come animatedly from corridor.* CLINGSWORTHY *crosses to* ELEANNE.] Mother—Isobel wishes to say goodnight—[*Hurrying* ELEANNE *to rails at left.*]

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Watching the move laughingly, then—, to* LADY CLINGSWORTHY.] Goodnight—[*Kissing*

her effusively.] Goodnight, Olympia. [*Who bows, smiles.*] But where's Pappy?

GEORGE.

[*Drily.*] He's probably looking after your supply of petrol on that road——

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Quickly.*] Then if Archie——

CLINSGWORTHY.

[*Smiling over his shoulder at her.*] If George——

GEORGE.

With pleasure—[*Offering his arm.* LADY TWEFFORT *frowns, takes it, and both go to plank.*]

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Pausing to look at the two at the plank, jealously.*] Archie—Miss Shelby—good night——

CLINSGWORTHY.

[*Over his shoulder.*] Goodnight——

ELEANNE.

[*Brightly.*] Goodnight, dear Lady Tweffort. [CLINGSWORTHY *attracts* ELEANNE'S *attention.* LADY TWEFFORT *frowns again and looks meaningly at* MAUDE.]

LADY TWEFFORT.

Maude—you—poor—child—[*Looking to rails at left.*] Go—to—bed—[MAUDE *pecks at* LADY CLINGSWORTHY'S *cheek and stalks into cabin*

down right front. Lady Tweffort *laughs and goes across plank with* George *and off to road.*]

Mrs. Farnum.

[*Going wearily to* Lady Clingsworthy.] Aunt Constance—[*Kissing her cheek.*]

Lady Clingsworthy.

[*Kindly.*] Goodnight, dear. [Mrs. Farnum *exits cabin at rear. Watching the two at rails, jealously.*] Archie——

Clinsgworthy.

[*Coming down with* Eleanne.] Mother——?

Lady Clingsworthy.

[*Rising.*] I'll say goodnight. [*Kissing him, then nodding to* Eleanne.] Goodnight, child.

Eleanne.

Ah—not that way. Or I shall think you've not forgiven me! Oh—, if you only knew how I want you to love me—. If you only knew—[*Running agitatedly into corridor.* Clingsworthy *looks after her with tender pity.*]

Lady Clingsworthy.

[*After a moment, touching his arm.*] Archie—it's so far to my cabin door—[Clingsworthy *offers his arm quickly and takes her to right. Making him pause, wearily.*] Ah—h—! The penalty for growing old!

Clinsgworthy.

We're all catching up, mother.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

I can't fancy you—and Eleanne as growing old!

CLINSGWORTHY.

Eleanne—, a few years hence—aha—who knows? But the mother of another Archie——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

There will never be a *better* Archie! [*Touching his cheek tenderly.*]

CLINSGWORTHY.

Flatterer! [*Kissing the hand and making her sit at right, then speaking over her shoulder.*] Mother—, find a place in your heart for *her!* [*Coming to kneel beside her.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Taking his face into her hands wonderingly.*] What *is* there about this girl that so bewitches you? She's wilful—, a butterfly——

CLINSGWORTHY.

I love her!

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

And changeable as the wind—[ELEANNE *appears listening in the corridor.*]

CLINSGWORTHY.

Aha—. She's always true to me! Eleanne is giving up father, home and friends——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

But you are giving her your ancient name——

CLINSGWORTHY.

Were I a king and Eleanne a beggar—[*Dropping his face to her knee.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

But—[*Smoothing his hair.*] This is mid-summer madness!

CLINSGWORTHY.

[*Looking at her.*] No, it is love! Can't you see, mother, what this girl means to me? Without her, life would be but half complete. But *with* her—Ah—love her for my sake. Mother—[*Lifting her.* ELEANNE *vanishes and* CLINGSWORTHY *draws his mother's arms about his neck.*] Mother, you haven't kissed me—in your old way, tonight. Come now——.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Looking up agitatedly at him.*] My son—[*Suddenly kissing him and stumbling away to cabin down right.* CLINGSWORTHY *looks tenderly after her.*]

ELEANNE.

[*Coming from corridor to* CLINGSWORTHY *with radiant look.*] Archie——

CLINSGWORTHY.

Eleanne—[*Clasping and fervently kissing her.*]

ELEANNE.

[*Returning his caress, then holding him off.*] Archie—, you've been fighting for me again?

CLINSGWORTHY.

'Gainst all the world!

ELEANNE.

But am I worth it!

CLINGSWORTHY.

Say again that you love me——

ELEANNE.

With all my soul!

CLINGSWORTHY.

Ah—h—. Those thirty days between!

ELEANNE.

Then why wait? [*Running to table at left, seizing and fastening on her cap and returning to him.*] Why wait—when there's the free road yonder? [*Seizing his arm and drawing him to plank.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Making her pause and staring at her.*] You mean——?

ELEANNE.

Let us find some quiet parsonage—some simple altar—. Come, Archie—come——.

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Laughing and drawing her to his breast.*] Oh—, what a witch you are! And—for a moment I believed you——!

ELEANNE.

[*Laughing hysterically.*] Did you, really? How I tease you! Forgive me—. "Were I a king and Eleanne a beggar——"

CLINGSWORTHY.

Hah—. You listened?

ELEANNE.

Yes—. [*Throwing herself on his breast.*] Oh—oh—oh——.

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Returning her embrace.*] Eleanne—Eleanne!

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

THE SECOND ACT.

The scene is the public parlour of "The White Swan Inn," at Richmond. Morning of the following day. The room is the usual public room, quaintly and attractively furnished. A wide window is set in rear wall, simply curtained and giving a glimpse of sunny lawn, a bit of ivy-covered wall and, far beyond, a wee kiosk sheltering a table and chairs. To left of the window is a mantel-shelf holding an ancient clock, pen and ink-pot, a vase of simple flowers, a small bell and several menu cards. Two small, polished tables at right, a larger table at left. These tables have wooden chairs pushed under each. A wooden window-seat. An ancient settee at right, with a chintz cover smoothly laid over its raised end. At left of the mantel-shelf is door 1, *which opens onto a country road. Door* 2 *is down front on the same side, and when open shows a bit of counter and shelf, with bottles, pewter mugs, etc. Doors* 1 *and* 2 *have keys. Door* 3 *is at right of window. Door* 4 *is far down front on the same side.*

[MARGET, *a pert young maid in cap and apron is dividing her time between flourishing a brush and blowing kisses to someone in the*

bar. After a moment she turns and demurely dusts. Hulks, *the red-haired, brawny young bar-keeper, in a white apron, peers in; finding* Marget *alone, he sneaks behind her and embraces her ardently.*]

Marget.

'ands h'off, 'ulks—. Yer don't h'own me yet.

Hulks.

An' why don't h'I?

Marget.

Pooh! Wut's fifty puns! It'll take more'n that to make me your missis!

Hulks.

You leave it to me, gel. 'ow's "pore Thomas" this mornin'?

Marget.

'e's still a-bed!

Hulks.

Well, let 'im stay there. Since h'I'm doin' 'is work h'I'm 'elpin myself to 'is till.

Marget.

That's right, too. "Live an' let live." Any tips today?

Hulks.

A shillin' only. [Marget *pouts.*] You leave it to me, gel—[*Kissing her.*]

ELIZA ROGERS.

[*A middle-aged, pleasant-faced woman in cap and apron enters door 4. Her smile changes to a frown.*] Hi, there—[MARGET *breaks from* HULKS *and dusts busily.*] 'ulks—, you git to the bar. Wut's pore Thomas 'irin' you fer if it ain't to 'tend to business?

HULKS.

All right, missis—[*Sullenly exiting door* 2.]

ELIZA.

As for you, 'ussy—, 'ow do yer think 'ulks kin mix drinks and serve trade an' you a-hangin' onto him? [*Crossing to the clock and beginning to wind it.* EDWIN *enters door* 3. *He looks depressed and wears his hat on the back of his head.*] Good mornin', Mr. Brown.

EDWIN.

Good morning, Mrs. Rogers—[*Looking at his watch.*]

ELIZA.

Want any breakfast?

EDWIN.

No appetite—, no sleep last night——.

ELIZA.

A-h—now! Not ill?

EDWIN.

No—, only a bit worried. Is your clock right?

ELIZA.

Exactly, sir.

EDWIN.

Only ten-thirty! Gad—, but the hours crawl! Guess I'll run down to the station and wait for that 'leven train—. [*Exits door* 1, *quickly.*]

ELIZA.

[*Laughing.*] Wants ter 'elp pull it in, too!

MARGET.

Yes. That must be why 'mericans is called 'ustlers.

ELIZA.

'urry h'up, Marget. It's a fine day an' 'er ladyship's promised to bring down some flannings to pore Thomas though the lord knows she's keepin' 'im waitin' for 'em.

MARGET.

'eard anythin' more about the big weddin', missis?

ELIZA.

'er ladyship's maid writes me that the old Countess is still a-fidgittin' and 'opin' agin it—, though, wi' the h'old h'Abby needin' new plumbin' and such, she ought to be thankful for them 'merican millions. They says as the young h'Earl 'ad a great to-do to cut h'out 'is rivals.

MARGET.

[*Sympathetically.*] Ah, now! Must 'ave been love at fust sight! Is she pretty?

ELIZA.

Ain't seen 'er yet. h'I 'ears that Miss Maude never misses a chance agin 'er, too.

MARGET.

'ow's that, missis?

ELIZA.

Miss Maude'd like to git the young h'Earl for herself. They says she makes eyes at him and rubs agin' 'im every chance.

MARGET.

Well, h'I calls 'er a 'ussy!

ELIZA.

So I says. And she kin twist the h'old Countess round 'er finger, too. But she'll lose, for the young h'Earl marries the 'merican next month sure. Bless 'is 'eart—for twelve year I followed marster Archie in 'is pinafores and pants and wut 'e wanted 'e allers got.

HULKS.

[*Running in excitedly from door 2.*] I say, missis——

ELIZA.

Say it. 'o's a-holdin' yer?

HULKS.

A keb comin' down the lane——.

ELIZA.

[*Pleasurably excited.*] It's 'er ladyship. 'ulks,

git back to the bar—[HULKS *exits again.*]. Marget, straighten that chair—, 'er ladyship 'ave the h'eye of an 'awk—[*Opening door* 1. LADY CLINGSWORTHY *enters. She looks weary, depressed.* MAUDE *follows with a bored look, carrying a small satchel and a book.*] Oh—, your ladyship—, I wuz just wishin' you'd take advantage o' this fine day—[LADY CLINGSWORTHY *allows* ELIZA *to draw her in and to seat her at table at left.*] Marget, 'er ladyship's tea—. Miss Maude——?

MAUDE.

Morning, Mrs. Rogers. [*Placing the satchel on the table at left, going to the window-seat, ignoring* MARGET'S *courtesy, sitting and opening her book.* MARGET *exits door* 4.]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Eliza—, I am utterly exhausted——.

ELIZA.

Ah-h—now! I'm so sorry! Let me take your bonnet——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

No, no—, I will keep it on. I shall want to visit old Mrs. Qualey presently—. [*Sighing deeply.*] O-h—, Eliza!

ELIZA.

It be a long ride from London—[MARGET *enters with tea-service to left table.* ELIZA *joins her and begins to pour tea.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

But not too far to attract trade, Eliza?

ELIZA.

Lor', no, your ladyship. All kinds come 'ere——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*With a displeased look, quickly.*] All kinds? But my instructions were——

ELIZA.

Lor', your ladyship. Pore Thomas lies a-bed wi' 'is h'eye on the gate, 'e's that partic'lar— [MARGET *represses a giggle. Aside to her, sternly.*] Git to the kitchen—[MARGET *exits door* 4. *Bringing the cup to* LADY CLINGSWORTHY.] That'll refresh your ladyship. And, Miss Maude?

MAUDE.

No tea for me, in July, thank you.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Whimperingly.*] Eliza, I've been exiled—on a wretched house-boat—, for six long days!

ELIZA.

h'Exiled? For why, your ladyship?

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

For some whim of my daughter-that-is-to-be.

MAUDE.

[*From the window-seat, sympathetically.*] Dear Aunt Constance——!

ELIZA.

But if the young lady's as rich an' as pretty as they says she is——?

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Ah—, you don't understand. [*Motioning to satchel.* ELIZA *gives it.* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *takes a roll from it and gives it*]

ELIZA.

[*Discovering contents.*] Flannings! Oh, your kind ladyship! Pore Thomas'll be glad.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

How is Rogers this morning?

ELIZA.

[*Her apron to her eye.*] Still bad. 'is pore legs is that swelled—. Will your ladyship go upstairs——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

I'm very sorry for Rogers. I'll run up to see him later. [*Rising.*] Maude, child——

MAUDE.

[*Coming down and putting her book on the table.*] Aunt Constance, you are not to ask me to stay with you in old Mrs. Qualey's stuffy room. I'll take you there and wander around till your visit's over.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Very well, child. [*To* ELIZA.] My son has condescended to take lunch with us here——

ELIZA.

[*Delightedly.*] The young h'Earl to luncheon!

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*With a tear in her voice.*] He only agreed because Miss Shelby has gone, for the day, to examine a newly-discovered Roman arch. [*Going with* MAUDE *to left.*] You remember my son's favorite dishes, Eliza?

ELIZA.

[*Opening door* 1.] Yes, m'lady. Chops, crisp bacon and he allers *did* love creamed pertaters!

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Smiling faintly.*] Yes. Luncheon at noon, sharp.

ELIZA.

Yes, m'lady—[*Exit* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *and* MAUDE. ELIZA *rings the bell on the mantel-shelf.* MARGET *enters door* 4.] Marget, get busy wi' this tray— The young h'Earl's to come down to luncheon an' if 'is h'appetite's wut it used to be—[*Exits door* 4. MARGET *examines the contents of the satchel, a handkerchief, which she discards, and a small bottle which she sniffs.* HULKS *sneaks from door 2 and embraces her.* MARGET *deftly reaches over her shoulder and places the bottle to his nose. With a mighty sneeze he releases* MARGFT, *who laughs and returns handkerchief and bottle to satchel which she places on the mantel-shelf.*]

MARGET.

Did 'er ladyship tip yer, 'ulksie?

HULKS.

Nary a time.

MARGET.

Must be 'conomizing for 'er son's weddin' present.

HULKS.

[*Embracing her.*] The only weddin' that interests me is yourn and mine.

ELIZA.

[*From beyond.*] Marget——.

MARGET.

[*Not stirring.*] The missis!

HULKS.

Let 'er bawl!

MARGET.

Thinks she h'owns us—. [PAPHEIM *peers into window, then vanishes to left.*]

HULKS.

Just let "pore Thomas" lie a-bed a month longer an' we'll 'ave a h'Inn of our h'own—. [PAPHEIM *enters door* 1, *and pauses smilingly.*]

MARGET.

'ulksie—[*Admiringly.*] You—never—mean—[*Embracing him ardently.*]

PAPHEIM.

'ello—, at eet—so early in de morning? [MARGET *breaks from* HULKS *and runs to her tray, seizes it, runs to door 4, throws back a coquetish look to* PAPHEIM *and exits.*]

HULKS.

[*Sullenly bringing a menu card from mantel-shelf.*] Wut's yer h'order, sir?

PAPHEIM.

[*Declining the card.*] I 'ave breakfasted in town. I am 'ere to meet a friend——

HULKS.

[*Scenting a tip.*] Lady or gent, sir?

PAPHEIM.

[*Laughing.*] And vhy so curious?

HULKS.

[*With a cautious look about.*] Because this h'Inn 'as certain rules agin single gents and their wives——

PAPHEIM.

But—[*putting his hand in his pocket.*] For a shilling, eh? [HULKS *wipes his palm on his apron with a grin. Withdrawing his hand.*] As it ees a gentleman I am 'ere to meet——

HULKS.

[*Tossing the menu on mantle-shelf sullenly.*] Nobody 'ome. You kin wait in the bar if you like—[*Going to left.*]

PAPHEIM.

[*Rising.*] 'old on. [HULKS *pauses.*] Imported or domestic refreshment?

HULKS.

The best o' h'English beer, sir——

PAPHEIM.

[*With a grimace.*]. Beer! Pah—, I decline. I will return. [*Exits door* 1. MARGET *re-enters door* 4.]

MARGET.

'e looked like a good thing, 'ulksie. Any tip?

HULKS.

[*His arm about her.*] Naw! 'e's wut young Brown'd call a "tightwad!"

MARGET.

Wut did 'e want?

HULKS.

Said 'e wanted to wait for a gent—but, judging by 'is bad h'eye——

MARGET.

You think it wuz some gel, eh?

HULKS.

Sure it wuz. [*Kissing her.*]

ELIZA.

[*From beyond.*] Mar—get—[MARGET *breaks from* HULKS *and pushes him to door* 2. HULKS

grins and exits. MARGET *runs to door* 4 *and exits. A slight pause, then* MRS. FARNUM *enters door* 1. *There is a touch of festivity in her dress. She looks about reminiscently.*]

MRS. FARNUM.

Nothing changed in four years! The same flowers, too! [*Ringing the bell on mantel-shelf, then sitting at table left and beginning to take off a glove.*]

HULKS.

[*Entering door 2. Genially.*] Yes, Miss?

MRS. FARNUM.

As this is the public parlour——

HULKS.

[*Bringing menu from mantelshelf.*] Wut's yer h'order, Miss?

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Smiling.*] The luncheon order can wait. In the meantime I expect a friend——

HULKS.

[*With a cautious look about.*] Lady or gent, Miss?

MRS. FARNUM.

[*With a surprised look.*] But is it necessary to explain?

HULKS.

When they's rules in this 'ere h'Inn——

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Coldly.*] But I do not intend to break any rules—. Therefore——

HULKS.

h'Oh—, h'it's h'all right, Miss. h'I kin be mum h'as a h'oyster—kin sneak the gent right h'in——

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Rising wrathfully.*] What do you mean? How dare you—[*Following* HULKS *to left.*]

HULKS.

[*Discovering his mistake with a grin.*] Wut, *nothin' to drink*——?

MRS. FARNUM.

Wretch—[*Following him to left.*]

HULKS.

[*At door* 2.] *No private room—?* [*Exiting quickly.*]

MRS. FARNUM.

"Sneak the gent in"—"Mum as an oyster"—*"a private room—."* Oh—Oh—[*Stamping her foot.*]

GEORGE.

[*Entering beamingly door* 1. *There is a touch of festivity in his dress also, in the rose in his coat.*] Olympia—we're together—, at last! [*Coming down delightedly.*]

MRS. FARNUM.

But I'm going away again!

GEORGE.

[*Amazedly.*] Going away again? But you've only just arrived. Didn't I keep the length of the car between us—the other side of the road coming down? Why—, I even waited till you'd entered that door—. Hah! You've changed your mind *since entering this room!*

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Embarrassed.*] And—and I can't explain. [GEORGE *goes to stare dejectedly from the window.*] Oh—, if I'd only come down here—openly! Instead of taking advantage of Eleanne's absence——

GEORGE.

Then I'm to thank Eleanne for that phone this morning——.

MRS. FARNUM.

Yes. As soon as she decided to look at that Roman arch—I took the chance——

GEORGE.

To "steal away" to meet a man who's record is passably decent——.

MRS. FARNUM.

But, George—if Aunt Constance should discover——?

GEORGE.

[*Coming to her and taking her hands.*] Come, now, when you left London, wasn't there a little bird a-singing in your heart?

MRS. FARNUM.

But, George—, isn't it too soon to be happy?

GEORGE.

[*Tilting her hat at queer angles as he speaks.*] Too soon? Haven't I got to make up for those lost years? [*Drawing her to left.*] Come on—. That row on the river—. May it not typify our sailing life's sea together——?

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Laughing.*] But you were not to mention——

GEORGE.

[*At door* 1.] If you're as happy as you look—, as I feel—. Ha-ha, we two—, in a boat——

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Indicating table at left.*] But—my glove——

GEORGE.

It's unlucky to turn back and—we can redeem it at luncheon—[*Both exit door* 1.]

EDWIN.

[*A slight pause.* EDWIN *enters door* 2. *He looks depressed as he falls on settee.* HULKS *follows grinning, small tray in hand.*] Yep, bring me something to drink—*something with ice in it!* Gad—. Every time I've seen a bit of ice in this benighted land—, it's been swaddled and coddled like a new-born infant—. [HULK *grins, exits again.* EDWIN *anxiously peers through window,*

looks at the clock, at his watch and finally falls on window-seat.] No Nella at the station—and every passenger out of sight! Wut if she doesn't come! Gad—[*Burying his face in his hands with a groan.* HULKS *enters with a glass on the tray, he crosses to* EDWIN, *grins down on him, coughs.* EDWIN *looks up, frowningly takes the glass, peers through it, shakes it, drinks the contents and discards the glass, returning to moody thought.* HULKS *grins, coughs.*] Wut you waitin' for? [*Hunting for a coin and finally fishing one from the depths of a pocket.* HULKS *grins and exits door 2.* EDWIN *broods again.*]

ELEANNE.

[*Peering laughingly in door* 1.] Ed-w-i-n——

EDWIN.

[*Waking up, rushing to her and drawing her in joyfully.*] Nella—and I'd almost given you up—. [*Seating her at table.*]

ELEANNE.

Would I desert an only brother in a scrape? No, indeedy! [*Dropping her handbag on the table and drawing off her gloves.*]

EDWIN.

And you've brought the money?

ELEANNE.

[*Taking from bag and holding up a check-book.*] Well, as good!

EDWIN.

[*Dancing with joy.*] Hurrah—. [*Running to mantel-shelf and bringing pen and ink to table.*] Now *my* troubles are over——.

ELEANNE.

[*Sighingly.*] Wish I could say the same.

EDWIN.

Why—, wut's troublin' you, Nella?

ELEANNE.

[*Preparing to write the check.*] Many things—, your being here is one of them.

EDWIN.

But didn't you beg me to disappear?

ELEANNE.

To go home, dear.

EDWIN.

[*Wrathfully.*] And stay there, while my only sister was being made into a "Clingsworthy!" Nella—, I've been treated shamefully—, old Lady C. almost ordered me from her door——.

ELEANNE.

[*Musingly.*] We've both been hard on the Clingsworthy nerves. And, after all, perhaps it would have been better—"when in Rome, do as the Romans do."

EDWIN.

Goin' in for decorum, eh?

ELEANNE.

[*Sighing.*] I shall have to, dear.

EDWIN.

Yer can't do it, Nella!

ELEANNE.

[*Dismally.*] You think I can't?

EDWIN.

Never. These Clingsworthys have been starched for generations, while you and I—[*Snapping a finger gaily.*] Thank the gods I can do as I please——

ELEANNE.

A-h—! Lucky boy!

EDWIN.

[*With tender concern.*] Sure you've picked the winner, Nella?

ELEANNE.

[*Radiantly.*] Sure! Three cheers because I love him—, three more because I mean to marry him! [*Looking up from checkbook.*] Now, about this money——

EDWIN.

[*Swaggeringly.*] Ya-as! My debt of "honor."

ELEANNE.

Shucks! Give it its honest-to-goodness name, your gambling debt!

EDWIN.

[*Embarrassed.*] Well, yes. [ELEANNE *begins to write.* EDWIN *reads over her shoulder.*] "Pay to the order of Edwin Shelby—[ELEANNE *pauses.*] Go ahead, Nella—. Wut yer stoppin' for?

ELEANNE.

Edwin, after paying that debt there will still remain twelve hundred and fifty dollars——?

EDWIN.

[*Leaving the table quickly and going to stare sullenly through the window, then as suddenly returning.*] Look here, Nella, have you come down here to lend that money or—, to pry into my affairs?

ELEANNE.

[*As sharply.*] I admire your sense of gratitude—. [EDWIN *again retreats to the window.*]

EDWIN.

[*After a moment, over his shoulder.*] Well, yer takin' it out of me.

ELEANNE.

And what are you taking out of me? I've actually lied to meet you here—, [*Angrily throwing down the pen.*] I wish I'd explained to Archie last night——

EDWIN.

And have him hand me out another lecture? Er—[*Regretting the slip.*]

ELEANNE.

So you've borrowed from Archie, too?

EDWIN.

Well, I offered him my note——

ELEANNE.

Which he refused to accept——

EDWIN.

Gave my word that dad'd pay——

ELEANNE.

Oh—oh—[*Holding her temples. Then sharply.*] Edwin, what have you done with all that money? Dad's allowance, Archie's loan, mine—and now this sum—. What have you done with it all?

EDWIN.

Gad—! You're like dad—, you "demand particulars."

ELEANNE.

[*Hastily placing checkbook in bag, seizing bag and gloves and moving to door* 1.] Dad's right, too.

EDWIN.

[*Running to her and clinging frantically to her arm.*] Wait—Nella—wait——

ELEANNE.

[*Holding her temples tiredly.*] Edwin, I've enough troubles of my own. Dad'll see you through——,

EDWIN.

[*Drawing her from the door.*] I've asked dad—but he's refused! Listen! Here *you* are—ready to give up all—, for love! [*With a gulp of decision, but without enthusiasm.*] Well—, it's the same way with me—*I'm* in love!

ELEANNE.

[*Tossing handbag and gloves on left table and dragging him to settee with a radiant look.*] *You*—in love!!! EDWIN! [*Making him sit beside her.*] Some dear little English girl—ready to go back to Kentucky with you—as your wife. Oh—, I'm glad—, glad! Dad'll miss me less. Well, go on, dear——?

EDWIN.

[*Not radiantly.*] Well—, she's *not* English.

ELEANNE.

Oh—, I'm sorry. English girls are so sweet.

EDWIN.

And while she's willin' to cross with me—, she's not prepared to become my wife! [*Moving off.*]

ELEANNE.

EDWIN!!!

EDWIN.

[*Flippantly.*] Well, the boat's big enough for two.

ELEANNE.

[*Meaningly.*] I am glad that you can assure me of *that*.

EDWIN.

[*Coarsely.*] Gad—, but you're becomin' wise. [ELEANNE'S *head droops. Sullenly.*] I beg your pardon, Nella.

ELEANNE.

[*After a moment.*] Does this girl know what people will think?

EDWIN.

She's willin' to risk that. We've talked things over——

ELEANNE.

[*Quickly.*] Oh, then she knows you are to ask me for this money?

EDWIN.

[*Fiercely, coming down.*] Cut it out—, cut it out!

ELEANNE.

So then, this—this—[*with scornful emphasis.*]

EDWIN.

[*With boyish enthusiasm.*] Dancer! Now you know. The owner of the lightest foot——

ELEANNE.

[*Aghast.*] You can't mean——?

EDWIN.

Saluda! Aha—, oho——

ELEANNE.

I saw the woman at the Beauclercs last week. Edwin—*she wears a mask.*

EDWIN.

Poah! Wut's a few years difference in our ages!

ELEANNE.

Silly boy! Go to her—, tell her that you are at the end of your resources and see how soon—

EDWIN.

[*Leaning over her fiercely.*] How dare you say that? You don't know her—, have never talked with her— —

ELEANNE.

[*Running to the table, taking checkbook from bag and holding it up.*] Take me to her and let me prove——,

EDWIN.

That you can buy her off?

ELEANNE.

Yes. The woman who would cross—at another woman's expense—, and under the "protection" of a mere boy——.

EDWIN.

[*Breathlessly.*] WELL?

ELEANNE.

That woman has her price! [*Again preparing to depart.*] I shall explain to Archie——

EDWIN.

And have her lose his fifty pounds? [ELEANNE

stares at him. Sullenly.] She's to dance at that dinner of his tonight——

ELEANNE.

[*Throwing up a hand triumphantly.*] Ah, then! [*Turning to go.*]

EDWIN.

[*Fiercely.*] Eleanne, *you will not dare——?*

ELEANNE.

If it will lift the scales from your foolish eyes! [EDWIN *flings away with a muttered word.* ELEANNE *looks after him with sudden agitation, then brokenly.*] Edwin! Is this the time to worry me? [*Dropping the bag on table and sinking on settee.*] Oh—, if you only knew what I've been through lately—, if you only knew—[*Sobbing.*]

EDWIN.

[*Rushing to her and tenderly drawing her head to his jacket.*] Nella dear—forgive me—. Nella—, Nella—. [*Mopping her eyes with his handkerchief and sitting beside her.*]

ELEANNE.

[*Recovering.*] Don't think, dear, that because I'm deserting you and dad that I love you the less—, ah no! Edwin—, that day last summer—when you carved "Abner Shelby and Son" on the porch at home—and we caught dad kissing the words—[EDWIN *turns away agitatedly.*] You must make them come true, dear. Now this

dancer—[EDWIN *rises, moves to window.*] Will she ever care for a fireside and the feel of little hands within her own? [EDWIN, *with a cry, seizes his hat and makes for door* 1.] Edwin—where are you going?

EDWIN.

[*Brokenly, over his shoulder.*] To Saluda—because I love her—. [*Exits door* 1.]

ELEANNE.

[*Following, then pausing near table.*] Oh—I can't let him ruin himself like this—I can't! [*Musingly, then suddenly.*] That dancer—at Archie's dinner tonight—. If I dared! If I dared! [*Holding her temples wearily, then taking checkbook from bag, moving to settee and falling on it.*] Edwin—he'll surely return for this check—[*Her head drooping against the arm of settee, the checkbook slipping from her hand to floor.* MAUDE *appears at window. After a moment* ELEANNE'S *eyes close.* MAUDE *vanishes to the left and enters door* 1. *She slips to a chair at the table and sits, her chin on her hand, staring at* ELEANNE. *Finally, going to the mantelshelf, she brings down one of the menu cards and rapidly sketches the sleeper, holds the card off, compares it with* ELEANNE, *takes pen, ink and sketch to mantel-shelf, placing the sketch behind the clock, looks back at* ELEANNE *with a crooked smile, and exits softly door* 1. *An instant after, a knock is heard.* ELEANNE *wakes with a start.* MAUDE *enters door* 1.]

MAUDE.

Well, of all the amazing things—. ELEANNE! [*In friendly manner.*]

ELEANNE.

[*In friendly manner.*] Ah, Maude? [*Rising and arranging her dress and hat.*]

MAUDE.

But, dear—, that Roman arch——?

ELEANNE.

My "impulsive" way of changing my mind. Are you alone?

MAUDE.

Quite. And you——?

ELEANNE.

As you see.

MAUDE.

But "the looks of the thing!"

ELEANNE.

And "the fun of the thing."

MAUDE.

You are right. Richmond's such a lark——,

ELEANNE.

Isn't it? One's so safe in a crowd. [*Going to table and taking up her gloves.*]

MAUDE.

Stay to lunch with me, dear.

ELEANNE.

Sorry. I must return to town.

MAUDE.

Well then, let's exchange confidences. Now, I've come down to pay off one of Aunt Constance's pensioners. And you, dear? [ELEANNE *smiles mysteriously.*] Eleanne—I believe you're here to meet—*some man!*

ELEANNE.

Wonderful penetration, dear. You are right, too.

MAUDE.

Whom you—*you care for?* [ELEANNE *makes an extravagant gesture of assent.*] Well—, for a girl that's *engaged*——,

ELEANNE.

As I hear that *you* are—to some fellow in Calcutta——?

MAUDE.

[*Laughing.*] Well—, perhaps!

ELEANNE.

Poor fellow!

MAUDE.

[*Sharply.*] Why "poor fellow?"

ELEANNE.

[*Taking her handbag and moving to left.*] Because "perhaps" means that you care for someone else. And I can't fancy a worse fate for a

girl than to be engaged to one man while loving another!

MAUDE.

[*Rising with clenched hands.*] Eleanne—— *don't go too far!*

ELEANNE.

Good morning, dear—. [*Exits at door* 1.]

MAUDE.

[*Fiercely.*] Oh—she can hit hard—, for a butterfly—[*Seeing the checkbook on floor, picking it up eagerly and reading.*] "Pay to the order of—" [*Throwing it on table.*] Pshaw! It was only Edwin after all. Oh—, if I could have detained her till Aunt Constance—. [*In moody thought, then going to mantel-shelf, taking the check from behind the clock and looking at it intently.* PAPHEIM *enters door* 1. *He looks at* MAUDE *in surprise, slips behind her, stares over her shoulder and suddenly seizes the sketch. With a stifled cry of alarm* MAUDE *turns, then laughs.*] Ah—it's you, Count? [*Noting his amazed look at the sketch and laughing.*] Good work, eh?

PAPHEIM.

[*Holding it off.*] De butterfly—to de life! But vhen—'ow——?

MAUDE.

I found her asleep on that settee—she'd come down to meet her brother—[*Papheim utters a disappointed cry.* MAUDE *slips the checkbook under*

a menu on table.]—whom of course you know is still in England——?

PAPHEIM.

It cost me two hundred and feefty pounds to know dat!

MAUDE.

Ah—? But the butterfly's sure to return. And—[*Pointing to sketch.*] You might put a price on that.

PAPHEIM.

[*Admiringly.*] Ah—, ve are birds of von feather—for vhile I scheme for de millions—you scheme for de man——

MAUDE.

[*Angrily.*] Give me back that sketch.

PAPHEIM.

[*Putting it in his vest pocket.*] No—, I may take your advice.

MAUDE.

[*With scorn.*] I was sure you would. [*Exits door* 1, *to re-appear at window as* MARGET *enters with a small tray of flowers, goes to mantel-shelf, exchanges them for those in the vase while slily viewing* PAPHEIM *as he stands pondering intently at left. He suddenly snaps a finger and comes down to* MARGET. MAUDE *vanishes from the window.*]

PAPHEIM.

'Ellow, sveetness—, [*Chucking* MARGET *under the chin.*]

MARGET.

[*Smiling and pointing warningly to left.*] Better look h'out for 'ulks, sir.

PAPHEIM.

Pooh for your 'ulks! [*Showing a coin.*] You see dis coin? [MARGET *reaches for it.*] No, no—. You must earn it first. [MARGET *goes sulkily to the window with her tray and begins to toss the flowers out.*] Come now—why be cross—, vhen I let you into a secret? I am 'ere to meet a lady—naturally, ve vant de room to ourselves.—[*Holding out the coin.*]

MARGET.

Then you lied to 'ulks when yer said it wuz a gent? [*Peering through curtains.*]

PAPHEIM.

[*Impatiently.*] Come now—vill you 'ave de coin?

MARGET.

[*Pointing to window as she leaves it quickly and seizes the coin.*] That must be your lady comin' down the lane—[*Running through door* 4. PAPHEIM *runs swiftly to door* 2, *locks and pockets the key and flattens himself against the door.* ELEANNE *enters door* 1, *hurries to the table, hastily searches and finds the checkbook, then turns to go.* PAPHEIM, *in the meantime, has slipped to door* 1, *locked and pocketed the key and now stands smilingly waiting.*]

ELEANNE.

[*Recoiling.*] Ah—you followed me from the station——.

PAPHEIM.

You are wrong, Mam'selle. I am 'ere to meet a gentleman——,

ELEANNE.

My brother—. [*Returning to table and preparing to write check.*]

PAPHEIM.

[*Laughing.*] Allow me, mam'selle—[*Bringing pen and ink from mantel-shelf.*]

ELEANNE.

Thanks. [*Writing check and flicking it across the table as she rises.*] That is the sum, I believe?

PAPHEIM.

[*After a mere glance.*] It is. Admirable Mees! You come down—, pay a debt—, and deesmees me, sans ceremonie—[*Shows the sketch.*] See—, while you slept—[ELEANNE *glances at it, startled, then indifferent.*] Madame la Comtesse vould geef a price for it, eh?

ELEANNE.

But you will not offer it—[*Meaningly.*]

PAPHEIM.

Because of milord——?

ELEANNE.

And a thrashing. [*Going to door* 1, *and finding it locked.*]

PAPHEIM.

[*Merrily, holding up the two keys.*] As are all of dem.

ELEANNE.

[*calmly sitting on settee.*] I shall wait for my brother.

PAPHEIM.

But vhy vaste time? [*Pointing to the check.* ELEANNE *is interested in her glove buttons.*] Come now—, [*Persuasively.*] Since I relinquish winning de daughter of de millionaire, surely I deserve a reward. Come—, change de figure—to de left——.

ELEANNE.

I refuse.

PAPHEIM.

[*Laughing and going to behind settee.*] Den I change de price—[ELEANNE *rises quickly.* PAPHEIM *seizes her hand over the settee.*] Beautiful butterfly—one kees—come—surrender——.

ELEANNE.

[*Angrily.*] I shall cry out—. [*A knock at door* 1.]

PAPHEIM.

I explain—a lovers' quarrel—and, for a shilling 'e goes out again—[*The door handle is rattled at left, confused voices heard beyond.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Eliza—ELIZA——

ELEANNE.

[*With dismay.*] It is——

PAPHEIM.

[*Laughing.*] Madame la Comtesse—[*Hurrying to table at left.*]

ELEANNE.

[*In lower tones—, appealingly.*] Oh—, you won't admit her?

PAPHEIM.

But vhy not? [*Pocketing the check smilingly.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

ELIZA—[*Rattling the door handle.*] ELIZA.

CLINGSWORTHY.

MRS. ROGERS—, OPEN THIS DOOR.

ELEANNE.

[*Terrified.*] It is——

PAPHEIM.

[*In dismay.*] Milord—[ELEANNE *stares round for a way to escape, suddenly runs to the window-seat and springs from it down to the lawn below, her hat seen as she rushes off to right.* PAPHEIM *laughs softly, hurries to table at left, places the sketch in* MAUDE'S *book, discovers* MRS. FARNUM'S *glove, places it nearby, swiftly*

unlocks door 2, then door 1, *and throws the latter door wide open, bowing smilingly as* LADY CLINGSWORTHY, *with surprised look,* CLINGSWORTHY, *with a frown, and* MAUDE, *with a bored look, enter.*] Ladies—, milord—, good morning.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Why—it's the Count. [*Smiling.*] Good morning.

PAPHEIM.

Ah, Madame—Milord—[*Bowing to* CLINGSWORTHY, *who ignores it.*] Mees Osborne—[MAUDE *bows and moves to window-seat, where she takes off her hat and coat and slily peers through the curtains.*] I am not de only one dat finds Reechmonde a charming place. I am 'ere often—[*Going to table and taking up book as if to resume a chapter.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*With keen looks about him.*] But—you'd locked yourself in.

PAPHEIM.

[*Laughing.*] An 'abit of mine.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

And we heard voices—[PAPHEIM *laughs and shakes his head.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

Two voices. [*Finding and holding up the glove.*] So you *have* been entertaining—[*Drop-*

ping the glove on table and moving off with disgusted look.]

PAPHEIM.

[*Laughing and closing the book.*] Vell—, perhaps. But milord is not to enquire. [*Taking his hat and bowing.*] Ladies, milord—[*Exits door* 1.]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Taking off hat and coat.*] Well, well—, of all surprises! And we certainly heard two voices. Maude, child——

MAUDE.

[*Coming down with hat and coat and taking those of* LADY CLINGSWORTHY.] Yes, Aunt Constance——?

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

As Archie must be famished, find Eliza and tell her we'll lunch in her nice, cool old parlour—[*Going to table at left.*]

MAUDE.

Very well, dear—[*Going to right with clothing, pausing, with a keen look at* LADY CLINGSWORTHY, *then exiting door* 4.]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Archie dear, why *did* the man go off so suddenly?

CLINGSWORTHY.

To avoid explaining about that glove—pah!

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

You were always hard on the Count—. [*Taking up the book.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

Pah—, those shifty eyes of his are poor recommendations——,

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

But Isobel Tweffort vouches for him—[*Discovering the sketch and staring at it with a stifled cry.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Laughing.*] Well, mother—, have you seen a ghost?

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Grimly—, beckoning to him.*] I certainly have! [*Showing the sketch.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Staring at it with consternation, then pulling himself together and laughing.*] Well, who is it?

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

You don't mean to tell me that you fail to recognize——?

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Moving off.*] Pen scratches only—, that's all I can see!

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Indeed? Archie, this sketch is an exact likeness of Eleanne!

CLINGSWORTHY.

Pshaw, mother—what a fancy! How could Eleanne's likeness get here—when she's miles away in London—looking at that Roman arch?

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

I don't care how you argue, Archie, I believe this is Eleanne's face——.

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Angrily.*] Mother, you are insulting Eleanne through me!

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

But, Archie, if you can explain——

CLINGSWORTHY.

Look at it this way. Papheim, like every man, admires a lovely face—, and, in an idle moment, he has the damned impudence—, beg pardon, mother—[*Floundering.*] to sketch—to sketch—.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Firmly.*] The features are of your future wife.

CLINGSWORTHY.

Well, can we prevent it? [LADY CLINGSWORTHY *takes the bell from mantel-shelf.*] Let us dismiss the subject——,

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Dismiss it? I shall not—[*Ringing the bell.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Biting his lip.*] This is a high-handed proceeding and may lead——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

To the truth. [*Enter* HULKS *from door* 2.] Send Mrs. Rogers, at once. [HULKS *bows, turns to right as* ELIZA *enters with beaming smile. Sternly.*] Eliza—, what lady guests have you entertained this morning?

ELIZA.

Not a one, your ladyship. [CLINGSWORTHY *utters a satisfied exclamation.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Eliza—I insist on the truth——.

ELIZA.

[*Quaveringly.*] I served your ladyship for twelve year without lyin'——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

I admit that. But—think again.

ELIZA.

Hulks'll bear me out—[HULKS *fumbles nervously with his apron.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*With a keen look at Hulks, then, sternly, pointing to door* 4.] Mrs. Rogers—, leave the room! [ELIZA *throws her apron over her head and begins to cry.* CLINGSWORTHY *puts an arm*

about her shoulder, guides her to door 4, puts her out gently and closes the door. Sternly, to HULKS.] Now, my man—, you've something to tell me?

HULKS.

Which, if I tell, will git me my walkin' papers.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Taking a coin from her purse and placing it enticingly near.*] No—, I promise you protection. Now——?

HULKS.

There *were* a lady 'ere this mornin', but the missis didn't know. A sort o' 'igh-stepper—[LADY CLINGSWORTHY *exchanges a look with her son, who comes down frowningly.*] And when h'l tells 'er this 'ere h'Inn don't cater to single gels without escorts——,

CLINGSWORTHY.

Keep to the facts, can't you?

HULKS.

[*Sullenly.*] If your lordship don't want me to tell—[CLINGSWORTHY *flings angrily off to the window and stares out.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Sweetly—, moving the coin nearer.*] Go on, my man——,

HULKS.

[*With a sour look at* CLINGSWORTHY *back—,*

glibly.] Then the lady h'admits she's waitin' for a gent—she h'orders a drink—[LADY CLINGSWORTHY *utters a cry of distress.*] Then a private room——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Falling back in her chair.*] A PRIVATE ROOM!!!

GEORGE.

[*Beyond door* 1, *singing.*]

"For he's a jolly good fellow——
For he's a jolly good fellow——"

[CLINGSWORTHY'S *face beams as he hurries to door* 1. LADY CLINGSWORTHY *stiffens and* HULKS *listens with bolting eyes.*]

GEORGE and MRS. FARNUM singing.

"For he's a jolly good fellow-w-w——
Which nobody can deny——"

[HULKS *seizes the coin and rushes through door 2, closing it with a slam as* CLINGSWORTHY *opens door* 1. GEORGE *enters with beaming smile, a streamer of river-grass depending from his lapel.* MRS. FARNUM *follows with a beaming smile, a garland of daisies about her hat. Both faces change to amaze,* MRS. FARNUM'S *to embarrassment.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Pulling them in.*] By jove—, will wonders never cease——?

GEORGE.

Archie—[*Coming quickly to* LADY CLINGSWORTHY.] Good morning—. [MRS. FARNUM *sinks on window-seat as she takes off her hat.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Giving her hand but looking beyond him to* MRS. FARNUM.] Good morning, George. Though I never expected — [CLINGSWORTHY *draws* GEORGE *off to right and whispers.* GEORGE *looks at* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *and shakes his head dismally.*] Olympia, you didn't mention coming down last night——

MRS. FARNUM.

I—I don't think I did, Aunt.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

I am positive you did not. Er—, you came direct to the Inn?

MRS. FARNUM.

You saw us arrive, Aunt.

CLINGSWORTHY.

From London—, with that garland on your hat? [*Holding up the glove.*] Yours? [MRS. FARNUM *comes to table, snatches the glove and retreats again to the window-seat.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Icily.*] You may as well admit——?

MRS. FARNUM.

I do, Aunt. George and I came down on the eleven train——,

CLINGSWORTHY.

Made your way to this Inn—[MRS. FARNUM *begins to tear the garland from her hat.*] Said as 'ow you were waitin' for a gent——

MRS. FARNUM.

Then that wretched waiter——

CLINGSWORTHY.

h'Ordered a drink—somethin' wuz said about a private room—[MRS. FARNUM *utters a cry of rage as* GEORGE *joins her.*]

GEORGE.

[*In lower tone—, hopefully.*] A private room? Ah—, that *was* good of you——

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Aloud.*] How dare you believe—[*Snatching the river-grass from his coat and discarding it, with the garland, to beyond.* GEORGE *moves dejectedly off to right.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Archie dear, that luncheon——?

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Gaily.*] Yes, mother — [*Opening door* 4. ELIZA *stumbles from the keyhole into* CLINGSWORTHY'S *arms. Patting her shoulder kindly.*] Lizzie—, we're all famished!

ELIZA.

[*Peering at* LADY CLINGSWORTHY.] But—, 'er ladyship——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Kindly.*] Eliza, I ask your pardon. I was wrong. Send in the luncheon.

ELIZA.

[*Radiantly.*] In a minute, your ladyship— [*Running through door* 4. LADY CLINGSWORTHY *again studies sketch.* CLINGSWORTHY *watches her worriedly.*]

GEORGE.

[*Joining* MRS. FARNUM *at window-seat.*] Hadn't we better explain——?

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Sharply.*] Explain what?

GEORGE.

What we were talking about in that boat—. One word to Lady C—and it will be all right.

MRS. FARNUM.

That one word—just now—is a decided "no!" [GEORGE *leaves her with a dejected look and joins* CLINGSWORTHY *at right.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Archie, I am still unconvinced——,

CLINGSWORTHY.

T'cha, mother.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

George, Olympia—, come here, both of you— [GEORGE *goes to* MRS. FARNUM, *and puts a finger on his lip.* MRS. FARNUM, *with a look of surprise, lets him draw her to behind* LADY CLINGSWORTHY, *where they look at the sketch over her shoulder.*] Now—, tell me if this does not look like Eleanne? [GEORGE *and* MRS. FARNUM *throw looks of dismay to* CLINGSWORTHY.]

MRS. FARNUM.

I can see no likeness whatever, Aunt Constance.

GEORGE.

[*Laughing.*] Aha—fancy Eleanne in a state of repose——!

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

What! You see NO resemblance——?

GEORGE.

I cannot. [*Moving off to* CLINGSWORTHY *with suppressed mirth.*]

MRS. FARNUM.

Nor can I! [*Joining the two at right, where they exchange whispers, while* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *studies the sketch.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

It's a most *amazing* likeness—. [MARGET *enters door* 4, *a white cloth in one hand, a small basket of silver in the other.* MAUDE *follows lan-*

guidly. MARGET *comes to the table, spreads the cloth and begins to handle the silver.*] Maude dear——

MAUDE.

[*Purposely delaying, boredly.*] What is it, Aunt Constance? [CLINGSWORTHY *sends a startled look to* MAUDE.]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Come here—. Tell me if that doesn't look like—, Eleanne?

MAUDE.

[*Glancing at sketch, then at* CLINGSWORTHY, *who makes a slight gesture of appeal.* No, Aunt—I see no likeness——

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Jubilantly.*] Aha, mother—. Even Maude fails to see it!

MAUDE.

[*With a crooked smile at* CLINGSWORTHY *and a second look at sketch.*] Aunt, you are right—, the likeness is amazing—even to the little curl at the ear that Archie so raves about——,

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Coming down, angrily.*] Maude—you don't dare——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Archie *dear*—, Maude is only trying to discover——

CLINGSWORTHY.

But—, since it isn't Eleanne at all——?

MAUDE.

[*Whimperingly.*] Dear me, Archie—, am I to blame if Eleanne——

CLINGSWORTHY.

But do you insinuate——,

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Archie, Maude is simply pointing out—, [MAUDE *goes to window-seat and sits mopping her eyes.*]

MRS. FARNUM.

But, Aunt, couldn't the sketch have been brought down here——?

GEORGE.

Hurrah! That's it. [*To* LADY CLINGSWORTHY.] Where did you find it?

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

To begin with—when we arrived here, we found the door locked—Archie and I knocked several times. We distinctly heard voices—, two voices—and suddenly the door was thrown open and Count Papheim appeared——

MRS. FARNUM.

[*In dismay.*] Papheim?

CLINGSWORTHY.

Remember, mother, that when we entered the man was quite alone——,

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Ignoring his remark.*] He briefly explained that he was here often—suddenly bade us good-morning and left. Then it was that I discovered that sketch within this book—[*Holding up the book.*]

GEORGE.

Aha—. Who owns the book?

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Bewilderedly.*] Why—, Maude owns it.

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*In triumph.*] Aha——!

MAUDE.

But Aunt Constance knows that I hate to stare from the windows of a train——.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

That is true.

MAUDE.

[*Mopping her eyes and returning to look at the sketch over* LADY CLINGSWORTHY'S *shoulder.*] Notice, Aunt, that the chintz on that settee is accurately copied——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Which proves that the sketch was made here—, yes.

MAUDE.

[*Turning the menu over.*] And since it has been drawn on one of Mrs. Rogers' menu cards, I demand, Aunt, that her servants be questioned——

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Quickly.*] Mother has already questioned——.

MAUDE.

[*Ignoring his remark.*] Beginning with this girl—[MARGET *suddenly drops the silver on the cloth and runs to right.* MAUDE *follows and draws her back to the table.*] Marget—, you've only to tell the truth——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

There's nothing to fear, Marget——[MARGET *sobs into her apron.*] Come now—, the truth—. [CLINGSWORTHY *comes down to the table.*]

MARGET.

[*Sobbingly.*] I only knows that the furriner said h'as 'e expected to see 'is lady friend——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Looking at her son with raised brows.*] Yes——?

MARGET.

Just then h'I sees 'er comin' along the road an' h'I runs h'out——.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Then you recognize—[*Showing the sketch.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

Mother—[*Seizing the sketch.*] I shall not allow——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Rising majestically.*] ARCHIBALD——!

CLINGSWORTHY.

Nor shall I permit this girl to prove—, [MARGET *rushes out door* 4.]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Give—me—that—sketch!

CLINGSWORTHY.

No—, I shall not. And since it has become a source of ill-feeling I shall destroy——, [*Tearing the sketch in half and discarding the pieces.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

But you cannot destroy the fact that Eleanne has been here——,

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Banging the table.*] MOTHER——!

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Leaving the table and beginning to weep, finally falling on settee.*] Locked in here with the man with the shifty eyes——,

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Banging the table again.*] This—, this is intolerable!

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

That she has allowed herself to be sketched— [*Sobbing.* MAUDE *and* MRS. FARNUM *go to her and try to soothe her.*] In a most unladylike pose. [MRS. FARNUM *runs to the satchel, seizes the small bottle from it and takes it to* LADY CLINGSWORTHY, *who rejects it.* ELIZA *enters and rushes to* LADY CLINGSWORTHY.]

CLINGSWORTHY.

Mother—stop it—stop it——.

ELIZA.

My poor dear lamb—[*Soothing* LADY CLINGSWORTHY.]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*With tearful eyes.*] Eliza—, you hear? [*To the group of women.*] Go away—, all of you—, I won't have you remain and hear—, my son revile me! [GEORGE *watches the scene from afar with twinkling eyes.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Repentantly.*] Mother—[*Going to her.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Go away, Archie—. I will never forgive you— [*To the women.*] Take me away—[*They lift her tenderly.*] I wish I—were dead—. [*They take her, moaning and sobbing, out of door* 3.]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Looking miserably after them.*] Good Gad—. [*Falling on settee.*]

GEORGE.

[*Taking his hat and coming down with suppressed laughter.*] Old man, I'll lunch in town, after all—. [*Looking round cautiously, in lower tone.*] And—I say—, it WAS Eleanne——?

CLINGSWORTHY.

Yes. But how—when and why—[*Giving it up with a groan.*] Damnation—[*Covering his eyes.*]

GEORGE.

[*Going to door* 1, *then looking back smilingly.*] See you tonight, eh? [CLINGSWORTHY *does not reply.* GEORGE *laughs and exits quickly.*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

THE THIRD ACT.

The scene is the London apartment of the Earl of Clingsworthy on the evening of the same day. An attractively-furnished room. Door 1. *is at left, and when open shows a hatrack and chair. To right of this door is a mirror-backed buffet holding bottles, glasses, boxes of cigars, a vase of red roses, a few printed programs and a small framed photo. At the rear is a draped window, giving a glimpse of lighted street and opposite houses. At right are doors* 2. *and* 3. *Near door* 3. *down front, is a small, furnished open desk. Beyond this again is a crimson-covered oval table. On desk and table are vases of red roses. At back-centre is a five-by-five-foot landing; a short stairway leads from it to a bit of gallery above. The landing is spanned by an arch, decorated with smilax and small red-and-white electric bulbs, not yet lighted. A bag of golfsticks near the buffet. Tennis rackets and a pair of foils on the wall. The room is brilliantly lighted.*

[GEORGE TEMPLETON, *in evening dress, lounges and watches* COGGINS *busy at the buffet.*]

GEORGE.

Well, Coggins, you've certainly gotten things up fine.

COGGINS.

[*The demure, drab-colored English valet of uncertain age.*] Thank you, sir.

GEORGE.

How long have you been here?

COGGINS.

Four year, sir. It's a good place, too, and the h'Earl's a most considerate marster.

GEORGE.

[*With twinkling eyes.*] And very few of his affairs escape your notice, eh?

COGGINS.

A good valet's motto is "keep your h'eye on your marster," your h'eye, sir. Now, this weddin' comin' h'off——

GEORGE.

[*Quickly.*] These walls look dooced lonely.

COGGINS.

[*Demurely.*] Like a church, sir.

GEORGE.

Those pictures and—that little bather with the bone in her nose——?

COGGINS.

Marster burned 'em h'up larst night. 'e's beginnin' with a clean slate. 'e's givin' h'up 'is peace o' mind, too—[*Taking the photo from the*

buffet and looking at it.] for, judgin' from the flash o' the h'eye o' the noo Countess——

GEORGE.

[*Looking at his watch.*] At what time does this dinner——

COGGINS.

[*Demurely replacing the photo and bringing down a program.*] h'Ordered h'at nine—. h'at nine-fifteen h'I'm to turn h'up the lights at that h'arch—. Program, sir? [*Giving the card.*].

GEORGE.

[*Reading.*] "Basso solo—Chinese juggler"—[*Whistling.*] Hello—Saluda, the Spanish dancer?

COGGINS.

From the h'Al'ambra, sir. Marster's to pay 'er fifty puns!

GEORGE.

[*Putting the program on the desk and laughing.*] Fifty pounds! But—as she's the last lady to honor these rooms——

COGGINS.

[*Taking a siphon from the buffet—, demurely.*] Mum's the word, sir. [*Exits door* 1. GEORGE *goes to the buffet, selects a cigar, lights it and looks at the photo with a low laugh.* COGGINS *re-enters quickly.*] Lady to see 'is lordship, sir.

GEORGE.

[*Frowning.*] Con-found it, Coggins—[COG-

GINS *indicates door* 1, *slowly opening. Discarding his cigar and coming down.*] Show the lady in, of course—. [COGGINS *opens door* 1. *and steps aside as* LADY TWEFFORT *enters in evening dress under a cloak.* COGGINS *retreats to buffet, where he fumbles with boxes, etc., lending an ear to the conversation.*]

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Coming down radiantly.*] Ah, George——.

GEORGE.

[*With raised brows.*] Oh—, Lady Tweffort.

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Laughing and dropping her cloak on the lounge.*] Why not "Isobel," George dear?

GEORGE.

[*Smiling and placing a chair.*] Isobel, of course—, but so sudden an apparition——!

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Laughing.*] Ah-h—you faithful watchdog—.

GEORGE.

But—, since you got past my kennel—[*To* COGGINS.] You may go, Coggins——

COGGINS.

[*Demurely, coming down.*] But—'er ladyship's cloak——

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Laughing.*] And I thought myself incognito.

COGGINS.

h'I saw your ladyship h'at Florence—[LADY TWEFFORT *frowns and moves off.* GEORGE *points to door* 1.] Yes, sir—, [*Moving to buffet, taking up a siphon and exiting door* 1.]

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Wandering about with admiring looks at the decorations, and making a bouquet for her corsage while watching* GEORGE *with an amused smile.*] George dear—, I'm so thirsty——

GEORGE.

Pardon—[*Going to buffet.*] Apolinaris—Celestin——?

LADY TWEFFORT.

Nothing *else* there?

GEORGE.

Sherry—Burgundy——?

LADY TWEFFORT.

Ah—dear old Burgundy—[GEORGE *fills and brings her a glass, which she drinks, returning the glass.*] Thanks—[GEORGE *takes the glass to buffet.* LADY TWEFFORT *makes a boutonniere from her corsage, meets* GEORGE *as he comes down, fastens it in his coat and steps back.*] There now—, to brighten an otherwise gloomy picture. [GEORGE *smiles and bows.*] George—, yours is a cold welcome. [*Going to him.*]

GEORGE.

But since I am *not* the host——?

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Laughingly touching his vest.*] Ah—what a piece of ice is here for Olympia——

GEORGE.

[*Frowning and moving off.*] Clingsworthy's not due for an hour yet.

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Lightly.*] Oh—. I'll wait!

GEORGE.

But—this dinner—. Very often risque stories—

LADY TWEFFORT.

After living with a man of Tweffort's timber! [*Finding the program on desk.*] "Basso solo—, Chinese juggler." Hah—. Saluda, the Spanish dancer—. [*Running to the landing.*] Shes to come down these stairs and dance here? Quite a pretty fancy, too.

GEORGE.

[*After a moment, taking the cloak to her—, winningly.*] Come—, let me fold this about you.

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Angrily snatching the cloak and throwing it on a chair nearby.*] I've come here to demand of Archie——

GEORGE.

The keeping of moon-made promises—? It was at Florence, wasn't it——

LADY TWEFFORT.

That your "wise counsels" overtook—[*Mopping her eyes agitatedly.*]

GEORGE.

Archie's infatuation. But—, as Tweffort was still above the daisies——?

LADY TWEFFORT.

George, I've been free for nearly a year. Yet Archie has deliberately avoided me—I've caught a glimpse of him in half a dozen houses, to discover that he'd vanished—*to avoid meeting me!* [*Agitatedly.*] I appeal to you, George—. Would any woman of spirit submit to such—such—[*Throwing up her arms.*] When I recall the plans we'd made at Florence—the memories——

GEORGE.

Well, if my sympathy will help——

LADY TWEFFORT.

Pooh! Your "sympathy!"

GEORGE.

Then I fear you'll have to be satisfied with those "memories."

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Stamping her foot.*] George, you are a brute. I won't listen to another word—[*Sitting on the lounge.*]

GEORGE.

Please—! [LADY TWEFFORT *barely turns an*

ear.] On that deck last night—when you sent Archie for your cloak—you followed him——?

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Bitingly.*] The faithful watchdog again! [GEORGE *laughs and bows.*] As for the few minutes we had together—during which Archie did his best to wriggle out of—[*Pausing and biting her lip.*]

GEORGE.

Those moon-made promises—[*Laughing.*]

LADY TWEFFORT.

You may continue to laugh. But the fact remains, that, on reaching home, I deeply regretted—[*Hesitating.*]

GEORGE.

Letting him off so easily——?

LADY TWEFFORT.

Exactly. I had barely time to warn him that I'd be here tonight——

GEORGE.

Which he refused to believe——

LADY TWEFFORT.

And when old Lady C—and the rest of you entered, he deliberately drew Miss Shelby away to those rails—[*Angrily.*] actually out of my "dangerous vicinity"——.

GEORGE.

You fancied that. But—, time is flying——

LADY TWEFFORT.

Let it fly. Isn't there a book or a magazine somewhere about?

COGGINS.

[*Entering door* 1.] A lady to see 'is lordship— [LADY TWEFFORT *starts, then listens eagerly.*]

GEORGE.

Con-found it, Coggins——

COGGINS.

[*In a lower tone.*] It's the noo Countess——

GEORGE.

[*Dumbfounded.*] The deuce! Detain her a moment—[*Exit* COGGINS. *Going to* LADY TWEFFORT.] Another visitor——.

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Laughing.*] Archie's reception night! Someone I know?

GEORGE.

[*Smiling.*] A lady—[LADY TWEFFORT *rises precipitately.* GEORGE *goes to right and opens door* 3.]

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Sulkily, following him.*] May I ask who——?

GEORGE.

Would that be fair?

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Entering door* 3.] Well, this will be as good

a place to wait — [GEORGE *looks worriedly to door* 1. LADY TWEFFORT *looks eagerly over his shoulder as* COGGINS *enters.* GEORGE *discovers* LADY TWEFFORT'S *trick, gently pushes her through door* 3, *closes it, then comes down quickly.* COGGINS *steps aside as* ELEANNE, *in coat and hat over her evening dress enters with a radiant smile.*]

ELEANNE.

[*Coming down.*] George—[*Offering both hands.*]

GEORGE.

Eleanne—. This is an unexpected pleasure——

ELEANNE.

Isn't it? [*Throwing off coat and hat.*] Olympia was giving a dinner—, her guests were strangers to me—. So, as it was dull and dreary—I slipped away—[*To* COGGINS.] Yes, Coggins—though I mean to fly away again—[COGGINS *bows and exits with her coat and hat through door* 1.] Isn't there a mirror somewhere? [*Discovering the one at the buffet, running to it and fluffing her hair while slily watching* GEORGE *through the glass.*]

GEORGE.

You ventured here alone?

ELEANNE.

In democratic style—, afoot. Why is it that you Englishmen fancy your streets are infested with bandits! Beyond an army of beggars and a few brainless fops—[*Coming down.*] Oh—what a

charming room! [*Finding the program on the desk and reading it.*] "Basso solo—Chinese juggler"—Saluda, the Spanish dancer—[*Running to the landing.*] She's to dance here?

GEORGE.

Sorry that Archie——

ELEANNE.

But Coggins assured me that he wasn't due for half an hour yet—[*Regretting the slip.*]

GEORGE.

Assured you!

ELEANNE.

Er—[*Wandering to the buffet and laughing.*] But—since he isn't here—[*Finding the photo.*] Oh—what a pretty frame I'm in. [COGGINS *enters with a box of cigars.*]

GEORGE.

[*With a meaning look.*] Coggins, just when does this dinner——

COGGINS.

[*Taking the hint.*] Begins in twenty minutes, sir.

ELEANNE.

Er—Coggins, has the dancer arrived?

COGGINS.

Not yet, Miss. But 'er costume's lyin' h'upstairs h'all h'arfternoon——

ELEANNE.

All spangles and ribbons?

COGGINS.

Somethin' stunnin', Miss.

ELEANNE.

George dear, I must have a look at that stunning costume—. [*Turning to* COGGINS.] Coggins——

COGGINS.

[*Grinning and moving to landing.*] This way, Miss——

GEORGE.

COGGINS—. [*Who pauses.*] There'll be a very thirsty crowd here in a moment—[ELEANNE *falls on the lounge dejectedly.*]

COGGINS.

[*Crestfallen. To* ELEANNE.] Then if Miss will excuse——

GEORGE.

She certainly will. [*Dismissing* COGGINS *to door* 1. *Looking keenly at door* 3, *then coming down to* ELEANNE.] My dear girl——

ELEANNE.

George—you are not nice to me—when all I wanted was to go up to that dressingroom——.

GEORGE.

But suppose the woman arrived and found you there——?

ELEANNE.

I'd live through *that!*

GEORGE.

But would it look well for the future Countess of Clingsworthy——

ELEANNE.

To pay a visit to a popular dancer in her dressingroom? Besides, at the Beauclercs last week——

GEORGE.

But, good heavens—! Mrs. Beauclerc wouldn't dream of letting the woman loose on her premises——

ELEANNE.

Yet she's good enough to dance for Archie and his guests!

GEORGE.

Well—merely because she's the rage. Archie has never seen her dance—. He heard that she'd left the Alhambra to go off tomorrow to Brazil—or Timbuctoo——

ELEANNE.

[*Coming to him agitatedly.*] George—, I'm in trouble.

GEORGE.

[*Laughing.*] If it's about that sketch of this morning—. Your old excuse "for the fun of the thing"——

ELEANNE.

No—no! It's something else. George—, you call yourself Archie's friend? Be mine too——!

GEORGE.

[*Taking her hand—, earnestly.*] I am and always shall be.

ELEANNE.

Then help me tonight—, help me blindly—. I must see this dancer—, I must—I must——!

GEORGE.

But why not wait till Archie——

ELEANNE.

No—, no—. I must see her without Archie's knowledge——

GEORGE.

Then I refuse. [ELEANNE *sinks on the lounge with a low cry and covers her eyes.*] But—my dear girl—the woman's so—so utterly impossible!

ELEANNE.

[*Quickly.*] The more reason that I must see her!

GEORGE.

[*Laughing and going to her.*] The Salvation people are the ones to look after this "erring sister." [*Lifting her.*] Come, let me take you back to Berkley Street—[ELEANNE *stands in agitated thought a moment, bites her lip to keep back the tears, then, with drooping head allows* GEORGE *to lead her to left.*]

COGGINS.

[*Entering quickly.*] Beg pardon, sir——

GEORGE.

[*Frowning and scenting trouble.*] Well, Coggins?

COGGINS.

The dancer's h'arrived, sir——

GEORGE.

[*Abruptly waving him aside.*] Well—confound it—, if she has!

COGGINS.

'ad a h'accident, sir.

ELEANNE.

[*Hopefully.*] An accident?

COGGINS.

Yes, Miss. Gittin' h'out o' 'er keb she sprained 'er h'ankle——

ELEANNE.

Poor woman!

GEORGE.

Of course you bundled her off at once——

COGGINS.

[*Stiffly.*] h'I 'elped the kebman carry 'er h'up to marster's dressin'room, sir.

GEORGE.

She's got to be taken off the premises——

COGGINS.

But she's h'in pain, sir——

GEORGE.

Then rub her down with liniment—, coal-oil—, mustard—. Get the cabman to carry her off and away with her—[LADY TWEFFORT *opens door* 3, *and listens.*]

COGGINS.

Yes, sir—[*Turning to go.*]

ELEANNE.

And, Coggins, tell her—, if I can be of use—.

GEORGE.

[*Aghast.*] What! You'd go off in a cab—with this woman——!

ELEANNE.

If she is suffering—I certainly shall!

GEORGE.

Coggins, you've a 'phone somewhere? [LADY TWEFFORT *closes the door.*]

COGGINS.

[*Going to right,* GEORGE *following.*] This way, sir—[*Opening door* 2.]

GEORGE.

[*To* ELEANNE.] I won't be a moment getting Giddings—, [*Exits door* 2.]

ELEANNE.

[*Meeting* COGGINS *as he comes down.*] Coggins, the dancer——?

COGGINS.

Yes, Miss. She's tearin' 'er 'air—. [LADY TWEFFORT *again opens door* 3 *and listens.*] She says h'as 'er reputation'll suffer h'if the newspapers 'ear about 'er h'ankle—says she needs the fifty pounds to git away tomorrow with——

ELEANNE.

[*Aside, agitatedly.*] WITH EDWIN!

COGGINS.

Say h'if she cud git someone to wear 'er costume an' dance in 'er place——

ELEANNE.

[*Down front—, radiantly.*] *Wear her costume—dance in her place—. Why not?* [*To* COGGINS.] That dressingroom—[*Running to the landing.*] Which way, Coggins?

COGGINS.

[*Firmly, but admiringly.*] I—I dassent, Miss—[ELEANNE *runs up the stair.*] Fust door to the left, Miss—[ELEANNE *vanishes. Expanding his chest and breathing deeply.*] A butterfly? She's a BIRD! [LADY TWEFFORT *closes door.*]

GEORGE.

[*Entering door* 2.] It's all right—. Gidding'll take the case—. Hello—, where is Miss Shelby?

COGGINS.

[*Demurely.*] Gone h'up to 'elp the dancer, sir.

GEORGE.

[*In consternation.*] Good God—! Coggins, a cab at once——

COGGINS.

Yes, sir—[*Hurrying through door* 1.]

GEORGE.

[*Listening at door* 3, *then leaving it quickly.*] I must prevent—[*Running to the landing and up the stair.*]

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Peering cautiously out, then entering.*] Oh—oh—[*In high spirits, throwing up her arms, then hurrying to the window, looking down, signalling and returning to front.*] This will be better than "waiting for Archie"—. The girl must be mad—to dare——

PAPHEIM.

[*Peering cautiously in at door* 1.] You signalled——?

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Running to him and drawing him forward.*] Pappy—you'll never guess—in a thousand years?

PAPHEIM.

[*With nervous look toward door* 1.] Milord's man 'ad left de door open—'e vill soon return—. Quick—what have you to say——?

LADY TWEFFORT.

Saluda's to dance here tonight—Saluda—the Alhambra dancer——

PAPHEIM.

Yes, I know 'er a leetle—. Vell——?

LADY TWEFFORT.

Clingsworthy's to pay her fifty pounds——

PAPHEIM.

[*Comfortably.*] Er—very good price, too.

LADY TWEFFORT.

She's upstairs now—she sprained her ankle getting out of her cab——

PAPHEIM.

[*Startled.*] Aho—[*Dejectedly.*] Den she loses dat feefty pounds——

LADY TWEFFORT.

No! Miss Shelby's just gone up to take her place——

PAPHEIM.

[*Animatedly.*] Viva de butterfly——

LADY TWEFFORT.

Listen. You've got to be present at this dinner——

PAPHEIM.

[*Recoiling.*] Nevaire——.

LADY TWEFFORT.

But you must. [PAPHEIM *shakes his head and turns to go. Seizing his arm.*] That hundred pounds you owe me—? [*Blowing off her palm.*]

PAPHEIM.

It's a go—. [*Laughing and helping* LADY TWEFFORT *on with her cloak.*]

LADY TWEFFORT.

A wire to old Lady C——, "the future Countess of Clingsworthy dancing here to the tune of popping corks——"

PAPHEIM.

[*As both hurry to left.*] Ah—vat says your great poet—" 'ell hath no fury——"

LADY TWEFFORT.

[*Laughing.*] "Like a woman scorned—?" He's right, too.—[*Both exit door* 1.]

GEORGE.

[*Coming down the stair to landing with worried look, mopping his brow.*] By Jove—not a sound beyond that door! If what I fear is happening—, [*Going quickly to the desk and hastily scribbling a line.*]

COGGINS.

[*Entering door* 1. *Indicating door* 3.] A car—just turnin' the corner, sir——

GEORGE.

[*Hurrying to door 3, and opening it.*] Hah—

she's gone—. Thank the gods! [*Enclosing the note and directing it.*] Coggins—a messenger—at once—[*Giving the note.*]

COGGINS.

[*Without a glance at the envelope.*] For Mrs. Farnum, sir——

GEORGE.

[*Frowning.*] Look here, my man——

COGGINS.

[*Subdued tone.*] Berkley Street, yes, sir——

GEORGE.

Rush it, too. [COGGINS *turns to left as* CLINGSWORTHY *enters quickly.* COGGINS *waits.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

Ah, George—, so I got here before my guests? [COGGINS *comes down, takes off* CLINGSWORTHY'S *coat and stands with bulging eyes on discovering an evening dress beneath it.* GEORGE *pantomimes* COGGINS *to hurry off with the note—in vain.*] Had a devil of a day—[*Sitting on the lounge—* COGGINS *instantly lays aside coat and hat, brings a drink from the buffet, presents it deferentially to* CLINGSWORTHY, *who takes it without comment,* COGGINS *demurely waiting behind him.*]

GEORGE.

[*Giving* COGGINS *up with a hopeless gesture.*] Then your mother——?

CLINGSWORTHY.

Safe at home—where I changed my dress—[COGGINS *bows to* CLINGSWORTHY'S *back, takes the coat and hat and exits door* 1.] Gad—, if Eleanne and I were but safely married! These escapades—, pure girlish mischief! Her vitality—. God bless her—, I love her the better for it. [*Crossing to buffet and placing the glass there. Returning and noting* GEORGE'S *gloomy look.*] Glum as an undertaker! Hasn't Olympia——

GEORGE.

Give a hat if she were here this minute——

CLINGSWORTHY.

Patience! Even glaciers melt! [*Looking about him admiringly.*] Coggins has done well, hasn't he?

GEORGE.

[*Walking about in gloomy thought.*] Archie—

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Laughing.*] Get it off your mind, old man—.

GEORGE.

I ought to warn you——

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Impatiently.*] Hang it, man—I've been listening to "warnings" all day. You don't suppose—because I brazoned out that sketch this morning that I enjoyed its discovery? No! But my faith in Eleanne is so strong that I've made up my mind to see, hereafter, no flaws in her conduct—,

to accept her, with all her capacity for michief—, and to thank God for her!

GEORGE.

In that case, there's nothing more to be said.

CLINGSWORTHY.

Not a single word. [*Door* 1 *opens,* COGGINS *is seen half-buried in coats and hats. Gay voices come from beyond. Two men-servants enter door 2, exchange the crimson cloth on the oval table for a white one, passing in and out of door 2, laying the table for dinner.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Radiantly welcoming a laughing youth in evening dress.*] Hello, Bradshawe—, glad you've come——

BRADSHAWE.

Quite an auspicious occasion, hey, wut? [*Joining* GEORGE *at right.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Greeting a youth with a monocle and an affected drawl.*] Hello, Singin—on time for once— [SINGIN *shakes his hand, goes to the table and views it speculatively.*] Anglesea—[*Welcoming a grotesquely but correctly garbed youth.*] Well, here *you* are——

ANGLESEA.

[*Laughing.*] Wouldn't be in your shoes—for a million—. Freedom for me!

CLINGSWORTHY.

Aw—you'll come to it. Hello—[*Grasping the hand of a youthful giant in evening dress, whose red-rimmed eyes and depressed manner excites the sly hilarity of his companions.*] Lanny, old man—this IS good of you—[*Bringing* LANCASTER *down affectionately.*]

LANCASTER.

[*In broad Yorkshire.*] Had rayther not coom, laddie——

BRADSHAWE.

Fact, Archie. Had to lassoo him to git him here.

CLINGSWORTHY.

Lanny, if you'd not turned up I'd have sworn you'd not forgiven me.

LANCASTER.

Nay—, never think't, mon. [*Suppressed laughter from guests as* LANCASTER *represses a mournful sniffle.*]

BRADSHAWE.

Use yer kerchief, Lanny—, use yer kerchief—[LANCASTER *seizes a chair nearby and raises it threateningly.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Preventing.*] Don't mind 'em, Lanny—[*Waving all to table.*]

SINGIN.

[*Viewing the table with a grimace before he sits down.*] These send-offs! So demnably depressin'——

ANGLESEA.

Like takin' a last look at the defunct, by Gad—. [*Cries of "shut up" as all sit at table,* CLINGSWORTHY *placing* LANCASTER *at his right. The dinner proceeds, the two men-servants passing about the table.* COGGINS *brings the programs from the buffet and hands them around.*]

BRADSHAWE.

[*Reading.*] "Basso solo—Chinese juggler"—. Hello, fellers—Saluda, the dancer.

[SINGIN *and* ANGLESEA *applaud.* CLINGSWORTHY *signals to* COGGINS *and gives him a whispered order.* COGGINS *bows, goes to the landing and waves his hand upward, returning to behind* CLINGSWORTHY'S *chair. A lusty voice from above the stairway howls out a basso solo, two verses, to applause,* LANCASTER *sitting with his chin on his fist in gloomy revery.*]

BRADSHAWE.

[*Merrily indicating* LANCASTER.] In the dumps. Poor old Lanny—[LANCASTER *seizes a bottle and rises threateningly.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Pulling him back to seat and removing the bottle.*] Don't listen to 'em.

LANCASTER.

Damn thim—[*Furtively mopping an eye. In lower tone, squeezing* CLINGSWORTHY'S *hand.*] But I want ye to know that the best mon won——

CLINGSWORTHY.

Then you'll come down to the Abbey——?

LANCASTER.

[*Forgetting to lower his voice.*] Aye—when there be sma' feet trottin' aboot—[*Laughter from the others. The largest dish is dispatched to* CLINGSWORTHY, *who rises and bows. Cries of "speech."*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Waving program.*] No, no—, give the Chinaman his chance—[*Cries of protest. Then abashed, hesitant.*] Friends—my maiden speech—so you can't expect—, expect eloquence. [*Cries of encouragement.*] Well, here we are—at this last dinner of mine—[*Mournful cries and laughter.*] this send-off into—sea of matrimony—. So I—I accept your felicitations—good wishes—. You all know what a prize I'm winning—[*Applause Then, abruptly, raising his glass.*] Here's to our future——

GUESTS.

[*Rising with enthusiasm and raising glasses.*] CLINGSWORTHY—MISS SHELBY—Y——

BRADSHAWE.

Here's to—[*pausing dramatically*] our American Butterfly—[*The toast is received with applause. All resume seats. Door 1 is flung open and a youth in evening dress lurches in, his coat half off and his hat at a dangerous angle.* COGGINS *hurries to divest him of coat and hat and*

takes them out door 1. *The others greet the newcomer with laughter and cries of* "ANSTRUTHERS" *as* CLINGSWORTHY *rises, brings him to the table, where a place is made for him,* CLINGSWORTHY *filling his glass.* GEORGE *slips from the table to left, signalling to* COGGINS.]

GEORGE.

[*Anxiously, in low tone.*] Coggins—that cab I ordered——?

COGGINS.

h'On 'and, sir.

GEORGE.

Good—. Have it ready—need it for Miss Shelby's use——

COGGINS.

[*With a wise look.*] h'I'm h'on, sir—[GEORGE *returns to the table.*]

ANSTRUTHERS.

Dry as a herrin'—[*Thirstily drinking a second glass as* CLINGSWORTHY *resumes his seat,* COGGINS *again behind him.*]

BRADSHAWE.

[*Reading program.*] Since we've disposed of the Chinaman—. Saluda—let—er—go! [CLINGSWORTHY *whispers to* COGGINS, *who bows, goes to the arch, touches a button, on which the red-and-white bulbs glow.* COGGINS *goes to the buffet, brings a box of cigars from it to the table, passes them round, and, finding the box empty, exits with it at door* 1.]

GEORGE.

[*To* BRADSHAWE.] Ever seen this dancer, Braddy?

BRADSHAWE.

Never. Been in mournin' for the last three months——

GEORGE.

How about you, Singin?

SINGIN.

A dancer? Pooh—, not my style of amusement. Give me books and books again.

GEORGE.

Angel——?

ANGLESEA.

Just back from Paris—heard of her there—learn she's left the Alhambra—so that, to see her tonight's O. K.

GEORGE.

[*Rising with a beaming look.*] Strange! Here's a popular dancer—the talk of London—yet not one of you fellers—[ANSTRUTHERS *bangs the table for attention and gets none.* GEORGE *sings.*]

"For he's a jolly good fellow,
For he's a jolly good fellow——"

ALL SING BUT ANSTRUTHERS and LANCASTER.

"For he's a jolly good fellow——
Which nobody can deny."

ANSTRUTHERS.

Hi there—[*Getting attention.*] Saluda—. Great frien' mine—[GEORGE *leans over the table and fills* ANSTRUTHER'S *glass.*] Know 'er well—. Good ole George—[*Drinking, and* GEORGE *again filling the glass.*] Talk 'bout yer vampires—she cost me—. Good ole George—[*Drinking again, his head beginning to drop to the table in a drunken sleep.* COGGINS *enters with a card.* CLINGSWORTHY *meets him at left, takes the card, reads it, frowns and tears it across as* GEORGE *joins him.*]

GEORGE.

Archie——?

CLINGSWORTHY.

[COGGINS *brings a sma ll tray from the buffet, gets the torn card and steps back with his eye on his master.*] That Hungarian hound——

GEORGE.

[*Aghast, turning to left.*] Powers. He mustn't enter—[COGGINS *turns quickly to door* 1. *to obey an unspoken command.*]

PAPHEIM.

[*Entering and coming down with a suave smile.*] Milord——? [CLINGSWORTHY *frowns.*] Templeton—? [GEORGE *turns his back. To the guests.*] Gentlemen—[*They ignore him, intent on placing chairs along the right for points of vantage beyond the landing. Deprecatingly, to* CLINGSWORTHY.] I saw your vindows lighted,

and—as I leave for Bavaria tomorrow—a last farewell——

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Grudgingly.*] In that case—a seat anywhere. [COGGINS *takes* PAPHEIM'S *coat and hat through door* 1.]

PAPHEIM.

Thanks, milord — [CLINGSWORTHY *abruptly moves off to right. Stringed music begins to come from the gallery.* PAPHEIM *sits comfortably on the lounge.*]

GEORGE.

[*In lowered tone, roughly.*] Now, you—what in Hades——?

PAPHEIM.

[*Recoiling, then defiant.*] Milord 'ave welcomed me——

GEORGE.

When he should have kicked you out—. What are you doing here?

PAPHEIM.

To explain de mystery of dis morning——

GEORGE.

Not the slightest need——

PAPHEIM.

But—, to lift suspicion from de lady——

GEORGE.

[*With a quick look toward the landing, then seizing* PAPHEIM'S *arm.*] Get out——

PAPHEIM.

[*Rising.*] Ah, well—[*Resignedly.*] A letter in de morning—[*Moving to door* 1, GEORGE *joins* CLINGSWORTHY *down right.* PAPHEIM *opens door* 1, *looks round quickly, swerves to the buffet and takes shelter beside the further end of same.* GEORGE *has managed to place* CLINGSWORTHY *with his back to the landing, and during the dance continues to talk animatedly to him. The music quickens as* ELEANNE *comes slowly down the stair to applause. She wears a Spanish dress alarmingly short at both ends, a half-mask with a fell of black lace and carries a tambourine. At the landing she bows and begins to dance gracefully; to louder applause she dances with abandon—for the pure joy of motion.* LANCASTER *sprawls at right and watches the dancer without enthusiasm.* BRADSHAWE, SINGIN *and* ANGLESEA *shout approval, snatch the roses about them and toss them to* ELEANNE. *She catches some in her tambourine, fastens one in her corsage, one behind each ear, tossing the rest of them back to the three, who catch them and decorate their coats. Finally, with a sweeping bow* ELEANNE *turns to ascend the stair.*]

PAPHEIM.

[*Running from the buffet to the front of landing clapping his hands.*] Bravo—bravo—magnifique—a — lala — bravo — [CLINGSWORTHY *turns quickly on hearing the voice.* ELEANNE *drops her tambourine on the landing and, rushing down,*

takes refuge behind CLINGSWORTHY. GEORGE *crosses to* PAPHEIM *quickly.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Spreading his arms to shield the dancer—, frowning at* PAPHEIM.] No horse-play here. This lady is under my roof and may claim my protection——

PAPHEIM.

[*Bringing the tambourine down laughingly.*] Milord meestake. I but applaud for de great pleasure — [*Offering the tambourine.*] Senorita — [ELEANNE *snatches the tambourine, rushes to the landing and disappears up the stair,* PAPHEIM *following quickly, still clapping his hands. Suddenly, staring toward the gallery, his face assumes a great amaze; he comes down laughing.*] Gentlemen—a discovery—a discovery——

GEORGE.

[*Seizing his arm.*] Shut up and get out——

PAPHEIM.

[*Laughing good-naturedly, getting away and addressing all.*] Viva la belle Americaine —. [*There is a sudden hush.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

Is the man drunk—or crazy——?

PAPHEIM.

I am neither—for I assure you dat de dancer is none oder dan milord 'ave chosen for 'is Com-

tesse—[*Stifled laughter from* BRADSHAWE, SINGIN *and* ANGLESEA *as they group off to right and whisper hilariously.* LANCASTER *begins to gather the scattered roses to the landing.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Seizing a glass from the table at right and flinging its contents in* PAPHEIM'S *face.*] Liar and scoundrel——

PAPHEIM.

[*Suavely—, wiping the liquid from face and vest.*] Ah, vell—to lie—in a lady's cause—[*In lower tone with deadly look.*] Milord 'olds 'imself prepared——?

GEORGE.

[*Stepping between with clenched hands.*] Clingsworthy fights—*with his equals only.*

PAPHEIM.

Bah—. *If 'e is afraid*——

CLINGSWORTHY.

When and where you please.

GEORGE.

Good heavens, Archie—[*In consternation.*]

PAPHEIM.

[*To* CLINGSWORTHY.] Tomorrow noon—behind dat Inn at Reechmone—. Pistols——

CLINGSWORTHY.

Agreed—[*Moving off as* COGGINS *enters door 1.*]

PAPHEIM.

[*To* CLINGSWORTHY'*s back.*] Milord—[*To the guests.*] Gentlemen—[*They ignore him and continue to whisper.*]

GEORGE.

[*To* COGGINS.] Coggins—[*Who comes down quickly.*] See this fellow out—[COGGINS, *almost stepping on* PAPHEIM'S *heels, follows him to the door.* PAPHEIM *looks back at* GEORGE *with a triumphant smile, then exits, followed by* COGGINS. CLINGSWORTHY *has fallen on the lounge. Going to him and laying a hand on his shoulder. In lower tone.*] Sorry, old man——

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Brokenly.*] Good God—[*Covering his face a moment.*]

GEORGE.

But we can lie out of it——

CLINGSWORTHY.

[LANCASTER *is now snatching the roses from* BRADSHAWE'S *coat.*] We can't. Look there——.

BRADSHAWE.

[*Protesting and laughing.*] Give it back, Lanny——

LANCASTER.

I willna—[*Snatches the roses from the others.*]

SINGIN.

Gad—, a valuable souvenir—. Give it back——

ANGLESEA.

Wuz goin' to 'ave it framed—[*Sly laughter from the others.*]

LANCASTER.

[*Adding the roses to the pile on the landing.*] Ye shallna have 'em till she gie's ye leave——

CLINGSWORTHY.

THEY KNOW! [*His head falling on his breast.*]

GEORGE.

[*After an agitated moment, joining the others.*] Of course you fellows know—because a certain lady chose to snub a rascal—[COGGINS *enters door 1. Cries of "we're on" and "mum's the word" sends* GEORGE *off. He signals to* COGGINS, *who exits quickly, returning with hats and coats. The two men-servants clear the oval table and try to wake* ANSTRUTHERS.]

BRADSHAWE.

[*Getting into his coat, whispering hilariously to* SINGIN, *then coming to the lounge.* CLINGSWORTHY *pulls himself together and rises.*] Archie, wish you a peach of a life's journey—[*Stifling a laugh and moving off.*]

SINGIN.

[*Shaking* CLINGSWORTHY'S *hand with a gay grimace.*] Had a rippin' evening—your future sure to be a lively one—[CLINGSWORTHY *bows mutely.* BRADSHAWE *draws* SINGIN *away, places*

his hands on his shoulder and both begin to shuffle their feet.]

ANGLESEA.

[*Coming to* CLINGSWORTHY *and patting his shoulder.*] Beau-u-utiful program—. The very poetry of motion — [*Stifling a laugh as* BRADSHAWE *draws him forward, where he joins the others in a shuffling line.*]

LANCASTER.

[*Seizing* CLINGSWORTHY'S *hand.*] Ye'll make allowance for a light heart, Archie — [CLINGSWORTHY'S *head drops.* LANCASTER *is seized and compelled to join the others.* COGGINS *has managed to clothe* ANSTRUTHERS, *and the two men-servants now support him at the end of the line, where he sways drunkenly.* BRADSHAWE, SINGIN and ANGLESEA, *with shuffling feet and sing to the air of "Auld Lang Syne."*]

"We're here because——
We're here because——
We're here because we're here"——

[COGGINS *opens door* 1 *wide for the line to exit.* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *enters, stares with disgust at the scene and leaves the door. The line breaks, the guests bow deferentially. She watches them out.* COGGINS *exits last.* GEORGE, *with a look of consternation has come down and placed a chair.* CLINGSWORTHY *is seated with covered eyes on the lounge, with his back to door* 1. LADY CLINGSWORTHY *ignores* GEORGE, *drops her cloak on the*

chair and comes to look pityingly down on her son.]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*After a moment, with a deep groan, looking up, staring at his mother and rising with assumed cheerfulness.*] Mother—what are you doing here? [*Putting an arm about her.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Shaking her head sadly and waving him away.*] My poor boy—[*Giving him a telegram.*] Read that! [*Watching him.* CLINGSWORTHY *reads with consternation, then, stiffling a groan, he tosses the telegram on the desk.*] Think of it—"*the future Countess of Clingsworthy dancing to the tune of popping corks.*" Oh—my God—[*Falling on the lounge and beginning to cry.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*After a moment.*] Mother—I'm sorry.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*With sudden fire.*] Then prove it! Eleanne must still be here—. Summon her and let her defend—*if she can*—[CLINGSWORTHY *makes a gesture of refusal.* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *makes for the landing.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Stepping between—, gently.*] No, mother—no!

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

But you have no right——

CLINGSWORTHY.

It is *you* that have no right——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

What! Another woman may enter your dressingroom—but your mother may not? [*Struggling to get away.*] I insist——

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Firmly, bringing her down.*] And I refuse.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Again falling on the lounge.*] I—I could have forgiven that escapade of this morning—. But tonight—, the centre of a group of men—*one of them intoxicated*—. [*Rising suddenly.*] Archie, you must choose between us—, here and now!

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*In consternation.*] MOTHER——?

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Oh—, it will hurt at first—but you'll thank me later on——

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Going to her and laughing a little.*] As for choosing between you—[*Trying to clasp her.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Breaking away.*] Very well—, go your way. I shall go mine. George—[*He comes down.* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *throws on her cloak and* GEORGE *takes her to left.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*With paling face.*] Then you put me out of your life, mother?

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Over her shoulder.*] Since you care so little for family honor——

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Agitatedly.*] And out of your heart, too?

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Pausing almost in surrender—, then, firmly.*] Yes—, I do—I must—[*Making* GEORGE *take her through door* 1. CLINGSWORTHY *looks after her, and makes to follow her. Then, with a groan, he falls to the lounge.* ELEANNE *comes half-way down the stair in her evening dress. She peers about cautiously, then, with animated look, comes to the landing, discovering* CLINGSWORTHY. *With a radiant look she slips to the buffet, takes a wee case from her bosom, powders her nose, arranges her hair, stealing little glances at* CLINGSWORTHY; *then, coming down softly, she touches his shoulder.* CLINGSWORTHY *represses a start, but remains with his chin on his hand.*]

ELEANNE.

Archie dear—? [*No answer.*] But of course you were surprised——

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Jumping up and marching wrathfully about.*] Surp—surprised!!! [*Laughing bitterly.*]

ELEANNE.

[*Pouting.*] Archie dear——.

CLINGSWORTHY.

And all "for the fun of the thing," of course! Ha-ha-ha——

ELEANNE.

For a better reason *this* time, dear.

CLINGSWORTHY.

Good God—that dance—*that encore*——

ELEANNE.

[*Laughing and arranging a stray lock of hair.*] Well, it *was* a bit uncalled for. But those dear boys applauding—. Did you ever hear such heavenly music—? Even a wooden idol would have danced—[CLINGSWORTHY *throws up his arms in silent fury. Radiantly, talking to herself.*] And to think that—awhile ago—in the depths of despair—but now—NOW—. [*Laughing softly.*] It was putting all my eggs in one basket, too——

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Controlling himself with an effort.*] Suppose we leave metaphor and come down to facts!

ELEANNE.

Wait till tomorrow, dear.

CLINGSWORTHY.

Tomorrow!!! [*With a suppressed cry of rage.*]

ELEANNE.

Because the secret isn't all mine.

CLINGSWORTHY.

You—you mean that someone else is involved?

ELEANNE.

[*Fluffing the lace at her bosom.*] Exactly that.

CLINGSWORTHY.

Some—man?

ELEANNE.

Archie dear—your guesswork is almost American!

CLINGSWORTHY.

But—, there isn't another man in all England that has the right——

ELEANNE.

Ah-h—. But there is!

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Clenching his hands and struggling for self-control.*] Eleanne—I can't let you stand there—, maddening me!

ELEANNE.

Wait till tomorrow, dear.

CLINGSWORTHY.

Eleanne—, we've chosen each other for life——

ELEANNE.

[*Going to him tenderly.*] And for Eternity! [*Her arms about his neck.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Looking down at her sombrely.*] If you believe that—[*Taking her hands and leading her to the lounge, where he seats her beside him.*] If you believe that—there shouldn't be a secret between us. Come—, explain. Beginning with that sketch——?

ELEANNE.

[*After a moment.*] Was I to blame because that wretched Count—[*Shutting her lips firmly.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

But—about your being there at all——?

ELEANNE.

[*After an agitated moment.*] Archie—, my reason for that—, for being here tonight—, [*with conviction.*] It was my duty to do it—my duty!

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Disappointedly, then leaving her.*] They recognized you under that mask——

ELEANNE.

[*Merrily.*] What if they did? They were my friends as well as yours——. Heavens—I've danced with 'em dozens of times——.

CLINGSWORTHY.

But not in such a costume——

ELEANNE.

Well—, it *was* a bit daring——

CLINGSWORTHY.

You don't suppose that Papheim will let the story stop here——?

ELEANNE.

Why not—since he was also your guest?

CLINGSWORTHY.

Never. The reptile forced his way in. He'll give the thing away——

ELEANNE.

[*In consternation.*] To the n e w s p a p e r s? [CLINGSWORTHY *throws himself into a chair in silent rage. After a moment, earnestly.*] Archie, don't think that I've carried this thing through lightly—, for I haven't. Oh—, I can't tell you what I've suffered in the doing of it—. But—since it had to be done—[CLINGSWORTHY *utters a cry of rage.*] Since it was to be the price of someone's honor——

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Coming to stand over her fiercely.*] You DARE to tell me—that—*to save the honor of another man*——

ELEANNE.

[*Looking up at him.*] Ah—[*Recoiling.*] You look like your mother now—. Just as she would look if she were aware of this—my latest sin against decorum——

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Savagely, moving off.*] Putting it mildly, too.

ELEANNE.

As another proof of my "abnormal point of view"—[*Agitatedly.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

And so it is!

ELEANNE.

My "almost banal impulsiveness"—[*Beginning to weep wildly.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Repentant, going to her and trying to take her into his arms.*] Forgive me—I was a brute.

ELEANNE.

No, no—. Let me alone—[*Mopping her eyes.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Angrily.*] But—, this is folly!

ELEANNE.

[*Passionately.*] Folly! Can't you see that the ways of your world are not the ways of mine? In yours—, every word and act must be weighed in an invisible scale—, selected—, rejected! Oh—, it's a stifling process and I should suffocate under it all—. And I see you—day after day, fighting my battles—, carrying my burden.

CLINGSWORTHY.

Then stay and share it with me——

ELEANNE.

After this dance—? No—, no—[*Running to door* 1.]

CLINGSWORTHY.

Then you no longer love me—? [ELEANNE *looks over her shoulder a moment, then rushes to his embrace.*] My girl—, my girl—. You mean to me—life—salvation. Every lock of your hair has wound itself about my heart—, this hand—, your eyes—, [*Kissing both.*] That sweet fancy of yours last night—, that quiet parsonage and simple altar—[ELEANNE *looks radiantly at him as he leads her to left.*] Let us go forth now and find it—[ELEANNE *pauses.*] Come—the cup of bliss for us tonight——

ELEANNE.

[*Retreating to right.*] Ah—, too much has happened since last night—[CLINGSWORTHY *follows with pleading look.*] For tomorrow—when your mother hears—[CLINGSWORTHY'S *eyes begin to seek the telegram on the desk.*]—as she surely will—[*Picking up and holding out the telegram.*] Are you looking for this telegram?

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*In a stifled, eager tone.*] Yes. Give it to me—[*Reaching for it.*]

ELEANNE.

[*Suddenly withdrawing it with an intent look.*] It belongs to you?

CLINGSWORTHY.

Yes and—, no. If you *please,* Eleanne——

ELEANNE.

If you will give me your word that it concerns me—in no way——

CLINGSWORTHY.

Pshaw, Eleanne!

ELEANNE.

Yet—, your anxiety to prevent — [CLINGSWORTHY *utters a suppressed word.*] But the address will assure me—[*Opening the telegram.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Agonizedly.*] ELEANNE——

ELEANNE.

Why—, it's addressed to—your mother! [*Staring at* CLINGSWORTHY.]

CLINGSWORTHY.

Eleanne—I forbid you to read that telegram—I forbid you—. Ah—[*With a pitying look as* ELEANNE *reads.*]

ELEANNE.

"The future Countess of Clingsworthy dancing—to the tune of"—[*Aghast and dropping the telegram.*] Archie—. Oh—! OH—! [*Brokenly.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

My poor darling—[*Going to her.*]

ELEANNE.

Your mother—she has been here—? [CLINGSWORTHY *nods mutely.*] She was here while I was up those stairs — *Archie — your mother knows.*

Then I am already judged! Goodbye forever— [*Rushing through door* 1. CLINGSWORTHY *snatches the telegram, fiercely, crumples it into a ball and flings it beyond, falling on the lounge in sombre thought. After a moment* COGGINS *enters. He looks keenly at* CLINGSWORTHY, *then moves off and begins to turn off the lights at the arch.* CLINGSWORTHY *looks up. Demurely.*] Miss Shelby away in the keb, m'lord——

CLINGSWORTHY.

Good. Coggins——

COGGINS.

Yes, m'lord?

CLINGSWORTHY.

Be ready to go down to Richmond tomorrow morning—eleven train.

COGGINS.

Yes, m'lord. Wut sort o' dress—? Boatin'—golfin'——

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Impatiently.*] Any old rag——

COGGINS.

[*With a shocked look.*] But, m'lord——

CLINGSWORTHY.

Shut up and get to bed.

COGGINS.

[*Backing to door* 2.] Yes, m'lord. Richmond—tomorrer—'leven train—[*At door 2 with bolting*

eyes, in lower tone.] Cood 'evings—. Any h'old rag—[*Exiting door* 2. CLINGSWORTHY *rises and goes to the buffet, taking from its drawer a long, narrow box. He brings it down to the oval table, seats himself, takes from the box a pair of pistols and begins to examine them.* GEORGE *and* MRS. FARNUM *enter softly at door* 1. GEORGE *looks at* CLINGSWORTHY *with dismay and* MRS. FARNUM *sinks on a chair nearby with a stifled cry.*]

GEORGE.

[*Coming to the table.*] Archie—, this duel must not take place.

CLINGSWORTHY.

It must and shall.

GEORGE.

But the man is known to shoot to kill! [MRS. FARNUM *utters a low cry and comes down.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*With a mirthless laugh.*] Since I've so little left to live for——

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Looking toward the landing.*] But—ELEANNE——?

CLINGSWORTHY.

Ha-ha—Eleanne left here five minutes ago——

MRS. FARNUM.

Thank heaven!

CLINGSWORTHY.

But before she left she threw me over——.

GEORGE and MRS. FARNUM.

Impossible!

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Laughing grimly.*] Quite positively, too.

GEORGE.

You must have quarreled—? [CLINGSWORTHY *takes a bit of chamois from the box and polishes a pistol.*] But—[*Resentfully.*] That "vitality" you thanked God for awhile ago?

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Brokenly, discarding the pistol.*] Olympia—George—. We'd made up—that glorious future never seemed so near—. Five minutes ago Eleanne was here—in my arms—[*Pausing and biting his lip.*]

GEORGE.

Well——?

CLINGSWORTHY.

Then she discovered that telegram—[GEORGE *and* MRS. FARNUM *exchange dismayed looks.*] I did my best to keep it from her—but when she'd read it—she instantly decided that—since my mother knew—. So—, after all—a well-aimed bullet—[*Closing the box and replacing it in the buffet drawer.*]

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Sinking on a chair and sobbing.*] Oh—oh——

GEORGE.

Don't cry, dear—[*Going to her.*]

MRS. FARNUM.

But—a duel—*with a man that shoots to kill*—

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Advancing.*] It's very good of you two to care. George—? [*Who comes to him quickly.*] May I venture to rely——?

GEORGE.

[*Seizing his hand, half-sobbing, half-laughing.*] Yes—yes—you may. Oh—I'll be there—con-found the scoundrel——

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Gravely.*] Thank you and—Olympia—. Good-night—[GEORGE *leads* MRS. FARNUM, *sobbing, out of door* 1. CLINGSWORTHY *goes to the buffet, selects a cigar, discards it, ponders, comes to the lounge, shakes up the cushion on it as if preparing to spend the night there—then wanders to the landing. He picks a rose from it, comes down stroking it dreamily, tenderly presses the flower to his lips, then suddenly falls face down on the lounge.*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT

THE FOURTH ACT

The scene is the same as at the opening of Act First—Parlour of the White Swan Inn at Richmond. Morning of the following day.

[MARGET *stands with her back to door 2. peering into a wee mirror and arranging the set of her cap.* HULKS *stands within door 1. with a scowl on his face.*]

HULKS.

Uh-h-h!

MARGET.

[*Startled and turning around.*] 'ow you scared me! Why can't yer come in like a 'uman bein'?

HULKS.

Wut you primpin' for so early in the day? h'I knows! Because this h'Inn covers a slab-sided, lantern-jawed h'English waley——

MARGET.

Mr. Coggins is a gentleman!

HULKS.

'e is, eh? Well, you warn 'im to keep away from the bar——

MARGET.

Pooh! Yer mighty brave—when nobuddy's

about! [COGGINS *enters door 3, carrying on his arm a pair of black trousers. He looks bored and yawns behind his hand.* HULKS *withdraws slightly.* MARGET *smiles.*] Mornin', dear Mr. Coggins. h'I 'ope you slep' well.

COGGINS.

[*Meeting her at centre and chucking her chin.*] Like a top, an' I dreamed o' you. [HULKS *enters and coughs.* COGGINS *turns quickly.*]

HULKS.

Wuz a-goin' to call me h'up, eh?

COGGINS.

[*Superbly.*] That's wut. Marster's trousers— [*Tossing them to Hulks.*] 'ave 'em pressed.

HULKS.

[*Tossing them back.*] h'I aint no man's walley. Press 'em yourself——

COGGINS.

[*Catching the trousers and placing them carefully over his arm.*] Well, of all the impident— [HULKS *spits on his hands.* MARGET *screams.*] Don't fear 'im, Marget. 'e's just a red-topped coward——

HULKS.

h'I am, eh? [*Making for* COGGINS, *who, using* MARGET *as a shield, runs round and round her in absolute terror.*]

ELIZA.

[*Entering door* 4, *staring at the scene, then running forward and flinging* HULKS *toward door* 1.] 'ere—'ere—'Ulks, you git to the bar—. As for you, 'ussy, to the kitchen—[MARGET *tosses her head and exits door* 4. COGGINS *is again superbly calm as he smooths the trousers on his arm.*]

HULKS.

[*At door* 2.] The missis just saved *you*—yer slab-sided, lantern-jawed——

ELIZA.

Git, 'ulks—git—[*Pointing to door* 1. HULKS, *with a scowl at* COGGINS, *exits.*] Dear Mr. Coggins—you're not to mind 'im!

COGGINS.

Oh—, h'I don't, Mrs. Rogers. 'e couldn't scare *me!*

ELIZA.

Ah—[*Admiringly.*] 'e goes when 'is month's h'up.

COGGINS.

Wuz makin' my way, peaceable-like, to your kitching, when 'e set upon me—. You saved 'is life, Mrs. Rogers.

ELIZA.

h'I believe it. [*Eagerly.*] Wutever brought the young h'Earl down 'ere again this mornin'?

COGGINS.

[*As eagerly.*] Carn't say! Wut's *your* h'idea, Mrs. Rogers?

ELIZA.

h'I 'aven't any.

COGGINS.

Nor more 'ave h'I. [*Drawing himself up stiffly.*] But we've got to 'ide the fambly skellingtons—[*Exits door* 4.]

ELIZA.

[*Wonderingly.*] Skellingtons!!! h'I'll 'ave to worm h'it out o' the young h'Earl 'imself—[CLINGSWORTHY *enters door* 3. *He nods to* ELIZA *and begins to wander restlessly from door to window with bent head.*] Master Archie—! But there, h'I never can remember you've grown h'up—it do seem so short a time ago that I was follerin' you about in your pinafore and pants—[CLINGSWORTHY *falls wearily on the settee, his head on his hand.*] Your man Coggins says you et no breakfast—an' you allers with a h'appetite, too—[*Taking the menu from the table.*] 'ere's h'all yer favorites—chops—creamed potaters—[*Offering the menu.* CLINGSWORTHY *stares at it, waves it aside and returns to his listless pose. Replacing it on the table.*] Pore boy—[*Gently touching his forehad.*] 'e's in a reg'lar fever.

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Shaking off her hand with an ironic laugh.*] I'll be cool enough—an hour from now, Eliza.

ELIZA.

[*Smiling pityingly as she goes to right.*] h'I 'opes so. [*Exits door* 4. CLINGSWORTHY *rises again and begins to march about in sombre musing.*]

GEORGE.

[*Entering door* 1, *his air almost cheerful.*] Morning, Archie.

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Sombrely.*] Morning, George. [*Sighing deeply and staring straight ahead.*]

GEORGE.

[*Placing hat and gloves on table at left.*] Any *new* trouble turned up?

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*With bitter emphasis.*] No. Nothing "new."

GEORGE.

Ah-h—[*Reaching for the menu.*] I'm glad of that. [*Reading the menu.*] "Chops—Frizzled beef—French toast"—[*Appreciatively.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

Umph! You've brought down an appetite for this occasion.

GEORGE.

[*Discarding the menu.*] But will going without luncheon help any? Besides, the rascal may not appear after all.

CLINGSWORTHY.

Bah—. And if he doesn't I shall go after him.

GEORGE.

[*Almost lightly.*] Although I've warned you that he shoots to kill——?

CLINGSWORTHY.

As I told you last night—since I've so little left to live for—[COGGINS *enters door* 4, *the trousers on his arm. He nears* CLINGSWORTHY *with a keen look on his way to door* 3.]

GEORGE.

[*Stifling a laugh.*] Ah, Coggins——?

COGGINS.

[*Tearing his "eye" from his master and holding up the trousers.*] Fancied 'is lordship'd want to wear 'is black suit back to town—[CLINGSWORTHY *smothers a groan.* COGGINS *stares at him with bolting eyes.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

Very thoughtful of you, Coggins. [COGGINS *remains with a fixed stare at* CLINGSWORTHY.] But—since he can hardly change into them *just now*—[COGGINS *throws a reproachful look at* GEORGE *and exits stiffly at door* 3.]

CLINGSWORTHY.

"Wear a black suit back to town." I probably will, too. [GEORGE *laughs uproariously.*] It seems

to me, George, that your merriment is on a par with your appetite——.

GEORGE.

[*Sobering.*] It ought to be, since, in my opinion, this duel is off.

CLINGSWORTHY.

Indeed! And what do you base this ,'opinion" on?

GEORGE.

Beginning then — did Eleanne explain last night just why she took the dancer's place?

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*After a frowning interval.*] She declared she did it—to save some man's honor.

GEORGE.

Could she have meant her brother?

CLINGSWORTHY.

Hardly—, since Edwin's not in England. But why go over the thing? I only know that I've lost her——

GEORGE.

You are not aware that Isobel Tweffort called at your rooms last night——

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Startled.*] The deuce she did. At what time?

GEORGE.

Before Eleanne's arrival—[CLINGSWORTHY *utters a cry of consternation.*] And, not wishing them to meet——

CLINGSWORTHY.

Certainly not!

GEORGE.

I put Isobel in that little corridor off your sittingroom——

CLINGSWORTHY.

Where she remained while Eleanne—. Good God——!

GEORGE.

Olympia and I've been putting things together and we've concluded that Isobel must have opened that door, listened to Eleanne's plan, and, while I was at the 'phone and Eleanne had gone up those stairs, she had slipped out, met Papheim round the corner——

CLINGSWORTHY.

And, between them, concocted that infernal telegram to my mother——

GEORGE.

Then the rascal returned—forced himself upon you, slipped to hiding while Eleanne was coming down to that landing, and, when the dance was ended—, he played his last card, gave away the identity of the dancer—roused your ire and—this duel is the result.

CLINGSWORTHY.

Damn him—. It was a trap——

GEORGE.

Out of which you can walk and be hanged to him. Hurrah—the duel's off. Which is exactly the reason for my "merriment" and my "appetite." [CLINGSWORTHY *remains in gloomy thought.*] Light up—old man—, light up.

CLINGSWORTHY.

With my trigger finger itching to punish him?

GEORGE.

But haven't I assured you that he's a crack shot? Surely, Archie—now that you see their game?

CLINGSWORTHY.

So your advice is—to let the two of 'em go scot-free, eh?

GEORGE.

Since it's the easiest way out——

CLINGSWORTHY.

For them—, yes. But how about my poor girl whom they've used and abused?

GEORGE.

T'cha——!

CLINGSWORTHY.

Besides, the whole wretched affair began as the result of my folly—. Those "claims" of Isobel's——

GEORGE.

But—since you quitted the game— [*With a short laugh*] in time to save the honor of both? Pshaw—. Go to Eleanne—explain that Florence episode——

CLINGSWORTHY.

You're mad as a hatter! Fancy my telling the girl that I'd hoped to win—such a rigamarole as that! She'd very properly despise me for making *her* pay for my damfoolishness——.

GEORGE.

You've nothing to fear from Eleanne—. Grovel in the dust at her feet——

CLINGSWORTHY.

Where she'd let me lie——

GEORGE.

For a day, perhaps——

CLINGSWORTHY.

Forever. [*In gloomy thought.* GEORGE *watches him apprehensively. Suddenly striking a hand in his palm.*] What! Let the rascal off *now!* I shall *not!* Aha—, I was half-hearted awhile ago because my poor girl's name would have had to figure in the newspapers if—if—. But, by Gad—it's Isobel Tweffort's name now. You'll remember that, George, if he finishes me—. [*Seizing* GEORGE'S *arm.*] Come—I've got to look over those pistols——

GEORGE.

[*Resisting.*] You don't mean that you'll meet him after all?

CLINGSWORTHY.

I certainly do.

GEORGE.

Man, you're crazy—stark mad!

CLINGSWORTHY.

No. My blood's up and I can see straight—, that's all. Come on——

GEORGE.

But I've promised Olympia——

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Half-laughing and taking up the menu.*] So Olympia's to be in at the death, eh? [*Drawing* GEORGE *to right.*] I'll get Eliza to set luncheon out under that little roof—then — if I come through—. Chops? A dozen of 'em—. As for creamed potatoes—I'll wallow in 'em— [*Drawing* GEORGE *out of door* 3.]

[*After a moment* ELEANNE *and* MRS. FARNUM *enter door* 1. Both look weary, ELEANNE *depressed.*]

ELEANNE.

Oh — this wretched Inn! Olympia — I'm *so* tired!

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Taking off* ELEANNE'S *coat and hat and helping her to the settee.*] You look it, dear.

ELEANNE.

[*After a startled look at settee, then sinking on it.*] I hardly closed an eye all night—[MRS. FARNUM *peers anxiously through the curtains.*] and when I did—the universe seemed whirling round. For whom are you looking, Olympia?

MRS. FARNUM.

I was merely watching the maid laying a table out on the lawn. [*Ringing the bell on the mantel.*] My poor dear—[*Going to* ELEANNE *tenderly.*]

ELEANNE.

Now—now you are going to tell me why you've brought me to this odious Inn—[ELIZA *enters door* 4. MRS. FARNUM, *behind* ELEANNE, *puts a finger on her lip.* ELIZA *takes the cue and stares at* ELEANNE.]

MRS. FARNUM.

A private room, if you please——

ELIZA.

Yes'm. [*Crossing to the mantelshelf and bringing down a menu.*] And as Miss may wish refreshment—[*Offering the menu.* ELEANNE *recoils at sight of it with a low cry.* ELIZA *stares, replaces the menu.*]

MRS. FARNUM.

Poor dear — you're suffering an attack of nerves—[*Raising* ELEANNE.] Run along, child.

ELEANNE.

[*Clinging to her.*] Not till you've explained—

MRS. FARNUM.

When you've bathed those tired eyes—I'll join you in a moment——

ELIZA.

[*At door* 4.] This way, Miss—[ELEANNE *goes unwillingly through door* 4. MRS. FARNUM *throws up her arms with a cry of relief, then peers through the window and listens at doors* 2 *and* 3.]

GEORGE.

[*Catching her listening at door* 3, *with twinkling eyes.*] Hello there—. Oh—, it's you, dear—Listening, eh?

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Stiffly.*] You're talking nonsense. I was merely wishing——

GEORGE.

That you could hear my voice beyond that door?

MRS. FARNUM.

You flatter yourself——.

GEORGE.

Forgive me—[*Going to her with extended hands.*]

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Waving him away.*] George—[GEORGE'S *face falls*] when we've all this trouble on hand, too.

GEORGE.

Ah—, you are right. Where is Eleanne?

MRS. FARNUM.

Gone upstairs to bathe her eyes. The poor girl must have wept the livelong night. You saw Aunt Constance?

GEORGE.

Called on her early this morning—she sent down word she was too ill to see me—I scribbled on a card that Archie would be here on the eleven train—also that Eleanne had thrown her son over. So that, if she wanted a reconciliation or——

MRS. FARNUM.

She'll be here—unless Maude prevents. You've told Archie——

GEORGE.

All—! Showed him the trap they'd set for him—advised him to walk out of it——

MRS. FARNUM.

Which of course he will——?

GEORGE.

He refuses—absolutely.

MRS. FARNUM.

You *can't* mean——

GEORGE.

Some Quixotic idea that Isobel and that Florence affair is the cause of all his misery—that Papheim must be met——

MRS. FARNUM.

Oh! Oh!

GEORGE.

Says he'll take his chance——

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Agitatedly.*] Archie must be crazy!

GEORGE.

He's simply mad! He declares that now that Eleanne's name needn't figure in the newspaper reports but Isobel's will——

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Sobbing.*] And to think that—within an hour — Archie may be a b-bleeding corpse— [*Rocking back and forth.*]

GEORGE.

[*Slipping to her side on the settee, his arm about her and rocking with her.*] It's awful—awful—. My poor girl—[*Then, in matter-of-fact tone.*] Well—we've done all *we* could.

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Rising wrathfully.*] So you are deserting Archie, too——?

GEORGE.

[*Crest-fallen, rising and following her about.*] But—my *dear*——

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Wheeling on him with fire.*] George—*Archie must be saved!* Put your man's mind to work—think out some plan to save him and there won't be anything that I'll refuse you—[*Giving both hands.*]

GEORGE.

[*Seizing them with a radiant look.*] Beware—Olympia—beware!

MRS. FARNUM.

Only save him——

GEORGE.

[*Releasing her hands to embrace her.*] I swear I will——

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Evading him and running to door* 4.] And—and there isn't a moment to lose—[*Exit door* 4.]

GEORGE.

[*Looking after her beamingly and pulling down his vest.*] "There isn't anything that I'll refuse you." Ah-h-h—. Why not meet the rascal at the station and buy him off—? [COGGINS *enters*

door 3, a tray in hand on which two small, empty glasses. Nearing George *with a gimlet eye.*] What—Coggins—*both* glasses?

Coggins.

[*With an injured look.*] 'is lordship got away with both h'of 'em. Said h'as 'ow' e needs a stiddy 'and—though I gave 'im a most partik-lar shave h'at 'is rooms this mornin'——?

George.

Sorry I can't enlighten you, Coggins.

Coggins.

[*With a wistful look.*] Somethin's got parst me, sir—'is lordship's h'ordered me to keep h'out o' 'is rooms till sent for—[*In a whisper.*] *h'I'm to stay in the bar there*——

George.

[*Laughing and going to left.*] Couldn't find a better place——

Coggins.

[*Following him.*] Not when there's a reptile servin' the drinks there——

George.

[*Laughing.*] As I've got to hurry off—I'll get that reptile to give me a bracer—[*Exiting door 2.* Coggins *peers through the door, stiffens grandly and marches after him.*]

[Lady Clingsworthy *and* Maude *enter door 1.* Lady Clingsworthy *looks weary and sad as*

she advances, handkerchief in hand, which she continues to use furtively. MAUDE *looks alertly about her as she begins to remove* LADY CLINGSWORTHY'S *coat and hat, retaining her own.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Well—, here I am again—, and I vowed, yesterday — never again to set foot in Eliza's wretched Inn— [*Sinking on settee.*]

MAUDE.

Poor, dear Aunt—you look worn out. Last night's ordeal was hard upon you—. You should have taken me with you to Archie's rooms—. I could have helped you with my sympathy, at least. [*Placing* LADY CLINGSWORTHY'S *clothing on the window-seat.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Please don't talk of it, child—. I—I want to forget it. And—a night's counsel tells me that I shouldn't have gone at all.

MAUDE.

Nonsense, Aunt. That telegram called for proof!

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Ah well—, I might have waited till morning. And I never should have gone, had you not urged it——

MAUDE.

[*Angrily.*] Aunt Constance, you are certainly ungrateful.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Well, perhaps I am. [*Sighing and holding her temples.*] Oh—, my poor head.

MAUDE.

You've not yet told me what George's card hinted at.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

That Archie would be here—also Eleanne—. Though I doubt that the poor child will come——

MAUDE.

[*Quickly.*] Why not, Aunt?

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

George added that Eleanne had thrown Archie over last night——

MAUDE.

[*Radiantly.*] Aunt! You never even whispered that fact——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Because I hated to believe it—for I know what it will mean to my boy——

MAUDE.

[*Frowning.*] Then this meeting is to be George's effort at reconciliation——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Brightening.*] Perhaps it is!

MAUDE.

Surely, Aunt, you will not approve——?

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

But they love each other so!

MAUDE.

What—*after that dance last night?*

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Which, after all, was not such a henious offence—[MAUDE *makes an angry gesture and moves to the window.*] Had it occurred *after* their m a r r i a g e—since Archie's guests were Eleanne's friends also, it would have been looked upon as an unique entertainment of a sprightly hostess——.

MAUDE.

[*Over her shoulder, scornfully.*] Indeed?

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Musingly.*] Eleanne must have looked charming in a Spanish dress!

MAUDE.

[*Coming down quickly.*] But aren't you forgetting "the looks of the thing?"

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Whimperingly.*] I do wish, Maude, that you'd cease to harp on that one string.

MAUDE.

Oh—. Since you've *quite* forgiven her——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Not until I know the truth about that sketch—[MAUDE *makes a startled gesture, moves down right and listens at door* 4.] which, after all, was a worse offence against decorum than was that dance—[MAUDE *utters a low cry.*] What is it, child?

MAUDE.

[*Coming to her quickly and seizing her arm.*] Eleanne and Olympia—I distinctly heard their voices beyond that door—. Come, Aunt——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Rising unwillingly.*] But why should we run away——?

MAUDE.

[*Taking* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *to door* 2.] Because it will be best to know where we stand—[*Indicating window*] and we can listen beyond that window—[*Exit both door 2. A moment after* MAUDE'S *hands are seen drawing the window curtain closer.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*From beyond the window.*] But I don't understand why——

MAUDE.

[*From beyond the window.*] Sh-h-hhhh——
[ELEANNE *and* MRS. FARNUM *enter door* 4.]

ELEANNE.

Now, Olympia—your explanation——

MRS. FARNUM.

If you'll promise to be calm!

ELEANNE.

Calm! A cyclone couldn't move me now—. And if Archie's mother could only see me——

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Discovering* LADY CLINGSWORTHY'S *coat and hat and sending a keen look toward window.*] Archie's mother! Poor Aunt Constance——

ELEANNE.

You are not deserting me for her, are you, Olympia?

MRS. FARNUM.

No. I am only telling myself that at last you and Aunt Constance will have a bond in common——

ELEANNE.

[*Scornfully.*] Indeed. What is it?

MRS. FARNUM.

A bond of sorrow——

ELEANNE.

[*Startled.*] Of sorrow? What do you mean?

MRS. FARNUM.

That it is the fault of you both that poor Archie, at this moment, is in a room upstairs——

ELEANNE.

[*Turning to flee.*] Archie here? [*Then staring at* MRS. FARNUM.]

MRS. FARNUM.

Examining his pistols—[LADY CLINGSWORTHY *appears at window, then vanishes.*]

ELEANNE.

Oh—, oh—, [LADY CLINGSWORTHY *enters quickly door* 1. ELEANNE *sees her with amaze.*]

MRS. FARNUM.

[*To them both.*] Preparing to meet that wretched Papheim in a duel——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Olympia—, if this is some cruel hoax——

MRS. FARNUM.

It's the truth, Aunt Constance—. And George assures me that the man *shoots to kill*—. [ELEANNE *buries her face in her handkerchief.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

My poor boy—[*Falling on window-seat and weeping into her handkerchief.*]

ELEANNE.

But, Olympia—the reason for it?

MRS. FARNUM.

At that dance last night—, when that wretch recognized you—, Archie resented it——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Looking at* ELEANNE *reproachfully.*] Eleanne, this is too much to ask a mother to bear——.

ELEANNE.

[*Brokenly.*] It is—and you'll never forgive me—[LADY CLINGSWORTHY *takes refuge in her handkerchief.*]

MRS. FARNUM.

But, Aunt, you deserted Archie in the same hour——

ELEANNE.

[*Looking reproachfully at* LADY CLINGSWORTHY.] *You—deserted—Archie!!!*

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

But, Eleanne—I gave him up to *you.*

ELEANNE.

After which I bade him goodbye forever. Oh!

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

See where we've brought him!

ELEANNE.

To his death!

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Rising and coming down.*] Eleanne, I've been unreasonable——

ELEANNE.

[*Meeting her.*] I've been cruel—cold-hearted!

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

I'm a wicked old woman——

ELEANNE.

[*Putting her arms about her.*] You are not. The fault has been mine. Forgive me——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

I do—, from my heart—[*Kissing her.*]

ELEANNE.

But we can't stand idly here with his life at stake—. Come, dear—we will save him—[*Taking* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *to right.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Together!

[CLINGSWORTHY *enters door* 3, *the polished box in his hand. He stares bewilderedly at the others and mechanically drops the box on a table at right.*]

ELEANNE.

[*Rushing to his right arm.*] Archie—Archie!

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Rushing to his left arm.*] My boy—my boy!

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Looking down on them amazedly.*] Eleanne—Mother—what are you doing here?

ELEANNE.

Where else should we be——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

At such a time——!

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*There is a tense moment as* CLINGSWORTHY *looks down at the two faces on his breast; then with an upward look of gratitude to a Higher Power.* ELEANNE, *reading his look aright, steals an arm about his neck and lays her face on his bosom.* LADY CLINGSWORTHY, *also reading the look, silently withdraws from his embrace and, with drooping head, moves to the settee, where* MRS. FARNUM *meets her.* LADY CLINGSWORTHY, *with a wordless look at the two beyond, falls into* MRS. FARNUM'S *embrace.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*To* MRS. FARNUM.] Oh—oh— [*Weeping softly.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Coming to earth and looking at the clock.*] Eleanne dear—, time is flying and I must go——

ELEANNE.

I can't let you go. Archie—I've been to blame for this——

CLINGSWORTHY.

No—no—, we've placed the blame where it belongs—on Isobel Tweffort——

ELEANNE and LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

On Isobel Tweffort——!

CLINGSWORTHY.

Yes. George will explain if—if I fail to return—[ELEANNE *utters a cry as he releases her and turns to take the box from the table.* GEORGE *enters door* 1 *with depressed look.*]

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Seating* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *on the settee and running eagerly to* GEORGE.] Well—George—well?

GEORGE.

[*To them all.*] I went to the station to meet the rascal and to buy him off—but he was nowhere in sight—. He's probably in these woods behind the Inn with his second—. Con-found him! [MRS. FARNUM *weeps disappointedly into her handkerchief.* GEORGE *draws her into his arms.*] I did the best I could, dear—[*Taking her to right.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Trying to release himself from* ELEANNE'S *embrace.*] Come, dear—. Be brave—and [*Laughing a little*] I'm not so bad a shot—. [ELEANNE *refuses to release him, and* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *again runs to his arms. Over their heads, appealingly to* GEORGE.] George——?

GEORGE.

[*Satisfied with the statu quo.*] They're right, Archie. They love you—then why not stay?

CLINGSWORTHY.

God knows that I wish I could. But to do so would give that scoundrel the chance to post me—in every club in London—*as a coward*——. No—no—I must go through with it. [EDWIN *enters door* 1. *Seeing him with surprise*—] EDWIN——!

[EDWIN *advances slouchingly. His eyes are red-rimmed, his hair touselled, his cravate awry and a general air of despondency envelopes him. He falls at the table at left, ignoring the cries of amaze about him and sobs boyishly into his handkerchief.*]

ELEANNE.

[*Running to him eagerly.*] Edwin dear—[*Tenderly drawing his head to her bosom.* CLINGSWORTHY, *after a quick look at* GEORGE, *comes down behind* ELEANNE *and listens understandingly.*]

EDWIN.

[*Mopping his eyes.*] Oh—, it's me alrighty—wut's left of me——

ELEANNE.

Then Saluda kept her word——?

EDWIN.

Up to the hilt! [GEORGE, MRS. FARNUM *and* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *gather at right and listen,* GEORGE *with twinkling eyes and repressed mirth,* MRS. FARNUM intently, LADY CLINGSWORTHY

frowningly—, with little sympathy for EDWIN.] Oh—[*Biting his lips to keep back the tears.*] she opened my eyes all right—you betcha——!

ELEANNE.

[*Comfortingly.*] But you'll get over it, dear.

EDWIN.

Because I see *now*—what a blind puppy I've been.

ELEANNE.

But tell me——

EDWIN.

Took your advice—went to her to "test her love." She'd gone to Clingsworthy's rooms to dance—. I waited till she came back—[*Pausing in self-pity.*]

ELEANNE.

[*Prompting.*] With a broken ankle——

EDWIN.

In one hand and your five hundred pound check in the other. Said she'd promised you to let me off—[*With a gulp of self-abasement.*] admitted she'd used me for a meal-ticket—and that the trip across was for the chance to grab off an American engagement—and wound up by tellin' me she was a wife and—mother!

ELEANNE.

[*Tenderly smoothing his hair.*] But — now that it's all over——

EDWIN.

[*Suddenly bracing himself and putting away his handkerchief.*] Nella, I've decided to go home at once—in the steerage *this* time——

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Smiling, over* ELEANNE'S *shoulder.*] Why not wait for your father's arrival, Edwin? [EDWIN *looks around shame-facedly as if just discovering an audience. To* ELEANNE.] So—this is that "other man."

ELEANNE.

Yes—. Your only rival—[*Giving her hands.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Taking them with a long look and repressed emotion.*] Eleanne—I should have trusted you more——

ELEANNE.

And I should have taken Edwin's troubles to you—that was *my* mistake——

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Gravely.*] You did not because you knew that I wouldn't understand. [*Looking at the clock, then to* EDWIN.] Edwin, you've solved several mysteries. And as I have a moment left——

EDWIN.

[*With indifference.*] What d'ye mean by a moment left?

ELEANNE.

Oh—Archie's to fight a duel with that wretched Papheim——

EDWIN.

Clingsworthy may make his mind easy for Papheim won't appear—[*Cries of surprise from all but* CLINGSWORTHY. *To* ELEANNE.] That check you gave him in this room yesterday——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*In a stifled voice.*] In this room—yesterday—[*Suddenly sobbing into her handkerchief.*]

EDWIN.

[*To* ELEANNE.] He raised it, one figger to the left——

GEORGE.

[*Laughing.*] Forgery, eh? The rascal——

CLINGSWORTHY.

How do you know that, Edwin?

EDWIN.

[*Shame-facedly.*] He admitted it when I saw him and—and Saluda on their way to Bavaria an hour ago.

ELEANNE.

[*To* CLINGSWORTHY *radiantly.*] Ah-h—. Gone for good! [MRS. FARNUM *looks joyfully at* GEORGE. *He takes her hand beamingly.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Tearfully.*] Eleanne—it was in this room yesterday that I condemned you——

ELEANNE.

[*Running to her comfortingly.*] But you didn't understand, dear——

EDWIN.

[*Suddenly rising with a belligerent look.*] Nella—I've been wonderin' what brought all these people down here to this Inn. They've been makin' you suffer for my faults—. They've put you on trial and pronounced you guilty—. I'm gonna make a clean breast of it——

ELEANNE.

No—Edwin—You must not—[*Going to him and seizing his arm.*]

EDWIN.

But I will. I must. [*To the others.* CLINGSWORTHY *moves off to right and listens with a sombre look.*] Look here. While you and Nella have been thinkin' I'd gone home—for the past four weeks I've been livin' under another name at this Inn—sneakin' up to London when I could afford it—. Gad—, I know now that I've been gamblin' mad—for I've thrown away thousands. Fancied myself in love, too—[*Biting his lip.*] Then when I was broke I went up to that houseboat of Nella's—demanded the loan of five hundred pounds—forced her to meet me here yesterday with the money—. But when I admitted that half was to pay my gambling debts and the other half was to sail to America with that woman—Nella was willin' to pay my debts, but

she refused to let me ruin myself—[LADY CLINGSWORTHY *represses a cry of self-reproach.* EDWIN, *mistaking it, glares at* LADY CLINGSWORTHY.] Nella, I know now why you'd gone and buried yourself on that houseboat—, it was to win Archie's mother to care for you. 'n' when you cried yesterday it was because you'd failed. Nella, America's the place for us. Come back to Kentucky with me——

ELEANNE.

[*Laughing a little.*] Edwin, now that you've got it all off your mind——

EDWIN.

[*Subsiding sheepishly.*] Well—maybe I *was* a bit heroic——

ELEANNE.

Simply absurd. And I have *not* been "on trial"—. Though heaven knows that my way of helping you out laid me open to a judgment of "guilty." [*Looking at* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *pityingly. To* EDWIN.] Edwin——

EDWIN.

[*After a moment, going to* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *with extended hand and subdued look.*] I—I beg your pardon—[LADY CLINGSWORTHY *mutely gives her hand.* EDWIN *resumes his place at the table.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Humbly going to* ELEANNE *and taking her hand.*] Eleanne—your brother is right. We *have*

judged you—*mis*judged you, too! We've tried you in many ways.

ELEANNE.

[*Bewildered by his look.*] But you haven't, dear—. There wasn't a time when I was in the right——

CLINGSWORTHY.

There wasn't a time when you were in the wrong. And I hardly wonder that your brother insists on taking you home—. Eleanne—[*Pointing to the ring on her finger.*] I release you from your promise — [*Leaving her.* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *stops mopping her eyes and stares at the two with anxious looks.* CLINGSWORTHY *moves down to right.*]

ELEANNE.

[*In consternation.*] Archie—I hardly understand——

CLINGSWORTHY.

Because you are too generous——

ELEANNE.

But suppose I refuse to be released——?

CLINGSWORTHY.

Ah—you ought to be glad—since I've proved so utterly unworthy——

ELEANNE.

Let me ask you the question you asked me last night—"then you no longer love me"——?

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*With an agitated look.*] Ah—you know that I shall love you always.

ELEANNE.

If that be so—. Archie—[*Waiting radiantly.* CLINGSWORTHY *goes to her humbly, looks intently at her then silently folds her to his breast, kissing her.* LADY CLINGSWORTHY'S *look changes to joy as she turns to* MRS. FARNUM *and* GEORGE. CLINGSWORTHY *takes* ELEANNE *slowly to the window-seat as* MAUDE *enters door* 1. *She looks swiftly toward the two at the window-seat with an agitated glance, then comes down left. At sight of her* EDWIN *begins to fumble in his pockets for something, pantomiming* MAUDE *with wriggling hand and j e r k i n g head.* MAUDE *glances at him once, with a haughty stare and raised brows, then ignores him.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Advancing joyfully.*] Maude dear—the duel is off for good.

MAUDE.

Yes. I heard from beyond that window. You were all quite noisy in your joy.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Resentfully.*] Noisy?

MAUDE.

Quite. But I was not surprised at the denoument——.

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

You were not? You might have given me that comforting assurance——

MAUDE.

[*Throwing a sneering look at* MRS. FARNUM.] Why should I—when you had your oracle—? [MRS. FARNUM *rises with an angry look.* GEORGE *draws her again to the settee.*] Olympia has engineered that "reconciliation" expertly, too. [*Sitting at table.*]

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Again rising.*] George—I must defend myself against so ridiculous a charge——

GEORGE.

But is it worth while? [*Again drawing her to the settee.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Maude, I can't understand your motives. Well—I give you up—. You are beyond me—. [*Joining* GEORGE *and* MRS. FARNUM *at settee, where the three whisper, ignoring the two at table at left.*]

EDWIN.

[*After a cautious look at the others, to* MAUDE, *slily showing her a card within his hand.*] Miss Osborne——?

MAUDE.

Your grimaces and beckonings are too silly.

EDWIN.

Huh—when I wanted to warn you——

MAUDE.

Against what, pray?

EDWIN.

Then you don't want to read this card——?

MAUDE.

Why *should* I read it?

EDWIN.

Signed by a friend of yours—Papheim——

MAUDE.

[*Repressing a start and then laughing.*] Why, I hardly know the man.

EDWIN.

Then you won't read it?

MAUDE.

Positively *not!* [*Beginning to unbutton her coat.*]

EDWIN.

Well, maybe it isn't worth your while, after all. [*Glancing at the card.*] Don't understand it myself—. Something 'bout a sketch—[MAUDE'S *face changes to terror, she rises, then collapses again. Staring at her.*] Wut's the matter? [*Again looking at the card.*] You gave him a sketch—didn't you?

MAUDE.

[*Staring round as if trapped, in low, appealing tone.*] Yes—I did—. My God—I admit it. But oh—don't give me away—. Tear the card up—[*Half-reaching for it.*]

EDWIN.

[*Withdrawing it.*] Not when I've promised to give it to Nella——

MAUDE.

[*Leaving her seat and coming to his side.*] Then promise to keep it for a few days——

EDWIN.

[*With a pitying look.*] Till you fly the coop—er—till you can git away?

MAUDE.

For a single day—. Oh—if you only will—? [*Those at the settee begin to notice.*]

EDWIN.

Well—I might do that. [MRS. FARNUM *comes down.*]

MAUDE.

Oh thank you—thank you——

EDWIN.

All right then——

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Confronting* EDWIN. MAUDE *recoils with a terrified look.* ELEANNE *and* CLINGSWORTHY *come*

to earth and listen.] Edwin—when I left Kentucky I promised your father to watch over his daughter—[MAUDE *suddenly puts out a hand to prevent* EDWIN *giving the card.* MRS. FARNUM *pushes the hand aside and holds out her own.*] *If that card holds a message for your sister——...*

EDWIN.

[*With a look of apology to* MAUDE.] Well, it does. It's a message from Papheim.

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Sharply.*] From Papheim? Since we've done with Papheim and his kind—[*In peremptory tone.*] Olympia, you may read the message aloud—[MAUDE *falls into the seat at the table with her face in her hands.*]

MRS. FARNUM.

[*Reading the message as* LADY CLINGSWORTHY *comes down.*] "Miss Shelby: In grateful recognition for your kindness to my wife—that sketch, taken while you slept awaiting your brother, was given me by Miss Osborne. Yours, Papheim." [*With a scornful look at* MAUDE'S *bent head.*] I always knew it—[*Joining* GEORGE *at the settee, where he watches the scene with quizzical smile.*]

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Sternly, standing before the table.*] Maude—[*Who looks up miserably.*] Stand up—instantly—[MAUDE *rises with bowed head. With scorn.*] Oh—the baseness—the baseness of the thing.

MAUDE.

[*Humbly, without looking up.*] Aunt Constance——?

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Don't—don't speak to me!

MAUDE.

Only to ask your permission to return to London at once——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

To plot *more* mischief?

MAUDE.

[*Wincing.*] No. I've decided to return to India tomorrow——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

I certainly approve of *that*. [*Turning away.*]

MAUDE.

And as you won't want to see me again I shall remove to the Langham tonight——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Do. Without delay!

MAUDE.

[*With a swift, agonized glance at the window-seat.*] Then I'll say goodbye now——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*On her way to the settee, coldly, over her*

shoulder.] Goodbye—[MAUDE *buttons her coat on her way to door* 1. *There she pauses with an agitated look at the others, to the window-seat last, then exits quickly.* EDWIN, *who has watched her with pity, returns to sit at the table, forlorn, neglected, in gloomy thought.* CLINGSWORTHY *and* ELEANNE *come down. Meeting them, in tearful tones.*] Archie—Eleanne—Maude's base conduct—and my blind following of her advice—. Oh—can you ever——

CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Gaily.*] Ah mother—, Eleanne insists on forgetting and forgiving, too—[*Kissing her across* ELEANNE'S *head. To* ELEANNE *with a tender look.*] But ah—those thirty days between——

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

Why not in ten, then?

ELEANNE.

[*Gaily.*] But dear—"the looks of the thing!"

LADY CLINGSWORTHY.

[*Bravely.*] But—"for the fun of the thing!"

CLINGSWORTHY.

[COGGINS *has entered door* 2 *with the small tray, both glasses on it filled. He steps gingerly to behind* CLINGSWORTHY *and gently thrusts the tray within his vision.* CLINGSWORTHY *laughs and takes a glass,* GEORGE, *who comes down with* MRS. FARNUM, *taking the other glass. Raising it*

to ELEANNE.] Here's to life and love—[*Kissing* ELEANNE *lingeringly.*]

GEORGE.

[*Raising his glass with a beaming smile to* MRS. FARNUM.] To happiness—[*Kissing her lingeringly.*]

ELIZA.

[*Sweeping wide the curtains at window where a white-spread table and* MARGET *can be seen under the kiosk beyond; thrusting her head into the window smilingly and ringing a small bell.*] Luncheon—luncheon — [*Vanishing as* COGGINS, *with a satisfied, demure look, exits door 3 with tray.*]

CLINGSWORTHY.

And we're all hungry — [*Taking* ELEANNE *through door* 1. GEORGE *follows with* MRS. FARNUM. LADY CLINGSWORTHY *throws a forgiving smile to* EDWIN, *who rises with a dawning smile, pulls down his vest, hurries to her, offers his arm and takes her out after the others.*]

END OF THE PLAY